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THESIS

SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY

by

David Ray Johnson

June 1990

Thesis Advisor: Mikhail Tsypkin

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Soviet Counterinsurgency

by

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B.A., University of Illinois, 1984

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to determine the presence or absence of a Soviet doctrine of counterinsurgency and to identify the historical patterns of Soviet counterinsurgency. The thesis examines the place of counterinsurgency in Soviet military thought and compares the Soviet counterinsurgent campaigns in Soviet Central Asia, the Ukraine, Lithuania, and Afghanistan. The thesis concludes that a pattern of Soviet counterinsurgency evolved in spite of the absence of an official doctrine but that the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan may inspire changes in the Soviet approach to counterinsurgency.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to determine the presence or absence of a Soviet doctrine of counterinsurgency and to identify the historical patterns of Soviet counterinsurgency. The development of these central themes should contribute to the secondary goals of the paper; first, to establish a fuller basis of comparison than is currently used in examination of Soviet and Soviet-advised counterinsurgent campaigns, and second, to add some historical depth to the developing body of work on Soviet counterinsurgency. This should allow for some useful generalizations about the Soviet approach to counterinsurgent warfare to be derived.

Counterinsurgency became a preoccupation of the U.S. military during the late fifties and early sixties. The U.S. involvement in Vietnam sustained interest in counterinsurgency and new challenges to U.S. interests in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have renewed attention to issues of counterinsurgency in the eighties.[1] Although the

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[1]See as an example of the literature of the earlier period: T.N. Greene, The Guerrilla--And How to Fight Him (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962). General treatments of the subject characteristic of the later period are: Robert B. Asprey, War in the Shadows, the Guerrilla in History (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975) and Walter Laquer, Guerrilla, A Historical and Critical Study (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976). Richard H. Schultz, The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Warfare (Stanford: Hoover Institution

insurgents (primarily the Central Asian Basmachi),[4] and comparative surveys of the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Soviets in Afghanistan and various Soviet allies fighting insurgents since 1975.[5] For the purpose of establishing the patterns of Soviet counterinsurgency the limited number of cases in the first two approaches is too narrow. Although the third approach examines more cases, it mixes dissimilar cases and blurs distinctions between Soviet methods of counterinsurgency and the methods of Soviet advised militaries fighting insurgencies.

A. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This paper examines Soviet thought on counterinsurgent warfare and develops a comparative case study of the Soviet Army in four counterinsurgent campaigns; the Basmachi uprising between 1918 and 1931, the post-World War II Ukrainian and Lithuanian uprisings, and the war in Afghanistan.[6] This approach offers the advantages of

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[4]One of the earliest was: Alexandre Bennigsen, The Soviet Union and Muslim Guerrilla Wars, 1920-1981 (Santa Monica: Rand, August 1981), N-1707/1.

[5]The first to treat the subject were: Mark N. Katz, "Anti-Soviet Insurgencies: Growing Trend or Passing Phase?" Orbis 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 361-391; and Rod Paschall, "Marxist Counterinsurgencies," Parameters 16, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 2-15.

[6]These four cases were selected based on the methods used by both sides, the general nature of the conflict and its duration, omitting counterrevolutionary activity in the Civil War, the Kronstadt uprising, the uprising in the Caucasus, and the rebellion in Tambov Province.

narrowing the type of cases to only Soviet, not Soviet advised, counterinsurgencies while increasing the time-span and number of cases of purely Soviet controlled insurgencies examined.

The work is based on English language sources and English translations of Russian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian sources. The availability of sources for each case study varied widely. The war in Afghanistan has generated volumes of material in the West and Glasnost has made many Soviet accounts of the war available as well. The war in Afghanistan has stimulated renewed interest in the Basmachi uprising, thus expanding the volume of work on that conflict but the available material is limited by the lack of accounts from the Basmachi side and consequent heavy reliance on Soviet sources. Researchers of the Ukrainian and Lithuanian resistance movements are handicapped with the opposite problem--an abundance of accounts from the side of the resistance but little available material from the Soviet side.[7] As much care as possible has been taken to glean the most objective accounts from among a limited selection of

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[7]Luba Fajfer, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Documents," Problems of Communism 37, no. 5 (September-October 1988): 77-84 describes the ongoing publication of German and Ukrainian documents on the Ukrainian Insurgent Army entitled The Chronicle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army. The primary sources contained in this collection (printed in German and Ukrainian) should lead to a more accurate record of the Ukrainian uprising. The Chronicle, however, still leaves the Soviet side of the conflict untold.

available material on the Basmachi, Ukrainian and Lithuanian uprisings.

B. DEFINITIONS

Western analysts of insurgent warfare have developed numerous definitions of insurgency and counterinsurgency. The following concise definitions can serve as the basis for development of one possible definition of insurgency and counterinsurgency from the Soviet point of view:

> Insurgency is the attempt by a militarily inferior faction (the insurgents) operating within a geo-political system, by use of guerrilla warfare and population control measures to usurp control of that system from the militarily dominant faction (the de facto government).

Counterinsurgency is therefore defined as:

> The attempt by the de facto government or other non-insurgent factions to prevent the insurgents from achieving control of the geo-political system.

The author of these definitions elaborates further by identifying resistance warfare as a sub-category of insurgency defined as:

> ...fought between a foreign occupier of a territory on the one hand, and the inhabitants of the territory who oppose such occupation on the other. "Foreign" is used to designate a de facto government whose main base of support (political, economic, military) is located outside of the geo-political system where the insurgency is occurring.[8]

To refine this definition it is important to note that, for the Soviets, insurgency or resistance warfare fought

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[8]Terry A. Rambo, "The Concept of Revolutionary Warfare," in: Strategies of Revolutionary Warfare, ed., Jerry M. Tinker (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1969), 6.

against a socialist regime is counterrevolutionary warfare rather than revolutionary warfare, as it is considered in the West. Counterrevolution is, "a regressive social process that is the direct opposite of revolution," which can take the form of, "armed resistance, civil war, mutinies, conspiracies, acts of sabotage, subversive activity, foreign intervention, and blockade."[9] Peter Vigor notes:

> ...movements directed against the rule of a communist party can never be regarded by communists as "wars of national liberation." In order to qualify for this title, a given war must be directed against a feudal or "bourgeois" subjugator. But when it is indeed against such a subjugator that the war in question is directed, then in modern times (i.e., since the October Revolution) it is invariably termed a "war of national liberation," and is given automatic approval by the Soviet Communist Party.[10]

C. SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY AND THE FUTURE

Mark Katz has asked whether anti-Soviet insurgencies are a growing trend or a passing phase.[11] This paper demonstrates that since 1917 armed resistance has been a frequent response where Soviet power has been newly established or reasserted, certainly a frequent enough

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[9]A.M. Prokharov, ed., The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, a translation of the 3rd ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1976) S.v. "Counterrevolution," by Iv. A. Krasin.

[10]Peter H. Vigor, The Soviet View of War, Peace and Neutrality (Boston: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 42.

[11]Katz, "Anti-Soviet Insurgencies: Growing Trend or Passing Phase?" 361.

response to be called a trend. This pattern continues today in anti-communist insurgencies in almost every world region where the Soviets are involved as advisors.[12] The West can therefore expect the Soviets to be involved in counterinsurgent campaigns, either directly or as advisors, for the foreseeable future. Less certain but in the realm of possibility is that current unrest among the minority nationalities in the Soviet Union may eventually develop into armed resistance movements in one or another of the minority republics of the USSR. The rising phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism and the uncertain repercussions of the Soviet failure in Afghanistan give this once remote prospect a certain degree of plausibility in Soviet Central Asia. In terms of Soviet involvement in counterinsurgent campaigns, the past is prelude and scholarly investigation of Soviet counterinsurgency becomes an important part of the body of work on Soviet military affairs.

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[12]See Rod Paschall, "Marxist Counterinsurgencies," Parameters 16, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 2-15.

II. SOVIET THOUGHT ON COUNTERINSURGENCY

The Soviets do not take war lightly. Warfighting and preparation for war has been central to Soviet ideas on national survival since 1917 and it is reasonable to say that the Soviet Union devotes more "intellectual capital" to preparation for war than any other nation in the world.[13] This attitude towards war was likely eventually to evolve from the Bolsheviks' recognition of the natural antagonism between communism and capitalism. The Civil War turned this likelihood into an immediate reality, speeding the development of a Marxist-Leninist military theory and hardening the Bolshevik perception of war.[14]

The founding fathers of the Soviet state recognized war as an important social process and acknowledged the

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[13]Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, eds., The Soviet Art of War (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 287.

[14]Peter H. Vigor, in: The Soviet View of War Peace and Neutrality (Boston: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 12, describes the October Revolution (and the civil war that followed) as a "watershed in the development of the Soviet communists' attitude towards war...." since prior to the revolution the communist attitude was based on "philosophical theorizing" but after the revolution Lenin, as de factor head of state, had operational control of a real army facing internal and external aggression. John Erickson, in his seminal work on the development of the Red Army, The Soviet High Command (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962) describes in detail the collision of pre-revolution theory with the practical necessities of the civil war and the eventual victory of expedience over theory.

Clausewitzian dictum of war as a continuation of politics by other means.[15] Yet the philosophical theorizing on war that preceded the October Revolution did not result in the development of a comprehensive Marxist-Leninist military doctrine. As D.F. White notes, it was left to Trotsky, Frunze, Tukhachevsky, and others who had experienced the civil war and its accompanying external conflicts to develop a military doctrine based on Marxism-Leninism. Trotsky's defeat by Frunze, Voroshilov, and Gusev in the military debates of the early 1920's made way for the rise of a monolithic military doctrine that guides the Red Army to this day.[16] That doctrine is based on the employment of combined arms and the doctrine of the offensive.

The Great Patriotic War did not alter Soviet views on the nature of war nor did it inspire a revision of Soviet military doctrine. Instead, the experiences of the Great Patriotic War reinforced the lessons of the civil war for the Soviets and validated their military doctrine. Even the advent of nuclear weapons did not significantly alter the basic structure and interrelationships of

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[15]Edward Meade Earle, "Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin: Soviet Concepts of War," in: Makers of Modern Strategy, ed. Edward Meade Earle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 322-323. Earle notes Lenin's marginal annotation of "i.e., forcible means" to the dictum.

[16]D.F. White, The Growth of the Red Army (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), 24-198, describes the civil war period and the ensuing military debates.

Marxist-Leninist military theory, military doctrine, or military art and strategy. The Soviets were able to integrate nuclear weapons into their combined-arms doctrine and retain the offensive as the preferred method of warfare.[17]

A. SOVIET THOUGHT ON WAR AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

Throughout the development of Soviet military theory, doctrine, and strategy the emphasis remained on the use of the greatest amount of force possible, based on the available military technology. While the Soviets pay lip service to the fact that new technology creates the need to develop new warfighting methods, the development of Soviet military doctrine indicates a tendency to change doctrine only in response to the most powerful technological

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[17]Condoleezza Rice, "The Making of Soviet Strategy," in: Makers of Modern Strategy, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 674. This is not to say that the Soviets have been unresponsive to technological change, Robin Lee Csuti, An Examination of the Current Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1988) outlines three "revolutions in Soviet military affairs." However, these revolutions were essentially changes in Soviet assessments of potential future wars and means of preparation for those wars based on technological advances. They occurred as experiential feedback within the framework of Soviet military theory, doctrine, and strategy, to be described below. A more fundamental change in Soviet military thought, inspired by nuclear weapons, may be occurring under Gorbachev. See, for example, Sergey Akhromeyev, "The Doctrine of Averting War and Defending Peace and Socialism," World Marxist Review 30, no. 12 (December 1987): 37-47 and Michael McGwire, "Rethinking War: The Soviets and European Security," Brookings Review 6, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 3-12.

developments and then only to the extent that the new technology can be made to fit the ever enduring doctrines of offensive and combined arms.[18] The Soviets seem to be dragged to the high end of the conflict spectrum by technological advances. This, combined with the dominance of lessons learned in the Civil War and World War II seems to provide a partial answer to why problems of counterinsurgency seem to have been almost completely absent from Soviet military thought up to 1979 in spite of several years of Soviet experience fighting internal insurgencies.

B. SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

The Soviets have devised a comprehensive scientific approach to the problems of war. It is multileveled with, of course, Marxism-Leninism as the uppermost, all-defining level of thought. From this highest level is derived a theory of war and army which in turn directs development of Soviet military doctrine. Doctrine, which is the level at which the party and the military interact most on military matters, has two sides: the political (the purview of the party), and the scientific-technical (the purview of the military, guided by the party). Doctrine determines the

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[18]See V.D. Sokolovskiy, Soviet Military Strategy, ed. Harriet Fast Scott (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1968): 25-33 and 260-303.

development of Soviet military science which encompasses, among other things, strategy, operations, and tactics.[19]

It is at the doctrinal level that theory is translated into practical reality. Marshal Grechko described Soviet military doctrine as answering the following basic questions:

- What enemy will have to be faced in a possible war?
- What is the nature of the war in which the state and its armed forces will have to take part; what goals and missions might they be faced with in this war?
- What armed forces are needed to execute the assigned missions, and in what direction must military development be carried out?
- How are preparations for war to be implemented?
- What methods must be used to wage war?[20]

By 1963, when the first edition of Soviet Military Strategy was published the Soviets still had not incorporated problems of counterinsurgency into their military doctrine. There was still no counterinsurgency doctrine developed by 1968 when the third edition was published. The deficiency was so glaring that the Rand editors of the first edition noted that:

> ...no doctrine of local war is developed in the book itself. Neither does the book deal with guerrilla operations and other forms of irregular warfare...the

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[19]See S.N. Kozlov, ed., The Officer's Handbook: A Soviet View, trans. USAF (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971): 39-66.

[20]In Graham Vernon, ed., Soviet Perceptions of War and Peace (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1981), 6.

> authors...note that Soviet military strategy faces a serious task in working out ways and means to deal not with modern wars in general, but with the conditions that apply to "a given particular war."[21]

Since Soviet doctrine determines force structure and training, the best evidence of Soviet neglect of doctrinal problems of counterinsurgency lies in the structure and training of the Soviet armed forces. By 1979, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, their army was still almost exclusively organized and trained for large scale conventional operations (and conventional operations in a nuclear environment) against similar opposing forces in Europe.[22] The lack of training for counterinsurgency or even for operations in mountain warfare was immediately felt in Afghanistan and further demonstrates Soviet doctrinal inattention to counterinsurgency.[23]

C. THE ANATOMY OF COMMUNIST TAKEOVERS AND SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY

This is not to say that a pattern or standard methodology of Soviet counterinsurgency has not emerged. As the following four case studies will demonstrate, a standard

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[21]V.D. Sokolovskii, ed., Soviet Military Strategy, trans. Herbert S. Dinerstein, Leon Goure, and Thomas Wolfe (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963): 48-49.

[22]Joseph Collins, "Soviet Military Performance in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Assessment," Comparative Strategy 4, no. 2 (1983): 161.

[23]Alex Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan (Santa Monica: Rand, May 1988, R-3627-A): 14-15, describes Soviet training deficiencies.

Soviet approach to counterinsurgency did evolve and it will be argued in chapter six that this standard approach amounted to a de facto doctrine.[24] This de facto doctrine had as its prototype not a previous counterinsurgent campaign but the Bolshevik seizure and consolidation of power. Study of one seminal overview of the methodology of communist takeovers, The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers, makes clear the parallels between the Bolshevik seizure and consolidation of power and the Soviet approach to counterinsurgency.[25] In it, Thomas Hammond lists six basic elements of the Bolshevik seizure of power: the use of armed force, the use of propaganda, ruthlessness, the party, planning (of a cohesive approach by the Party), use of camouflage (of the Party's true intentions).[26] These methods and their sub-elements, such as purge of the population, collective responsibility, terror and repression, collectivization, and mass deportations, appear repeatedly in Soviet counterinsurgent campaigns just as they did during the Bolshevik revolution and the Stalin era. In

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[24]The author uses doctrine in this case in the more general sense that it is used in the West, indicating a generally accepted methodology and encompassing strategy, operations, and tactics. The emergence of a de facto doctrine in this sense did not create a place for counterinsurgency within Soviet military thought in the Soviets' formalistic definition of doctrine.

[25]Thomas T. Hammond, ed., The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

[26]Hammond, Anatomy of Communist Takeovers, 2-3.

effect, the methods of revolution became the weapons against counterrevolution.

None of this, however, worked its way into established Soviet military thought. Instead it existed almost as an automatic or by rote response to insurgencies. Under the conditions of the first three cases examined, Turkestan, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, this was sufficient and apparently obviated for the Soviets any need to develop doctrine or training specific to counterinsurgency. In Afghanistan, where the old approach proved ineffective, the lack of a doctrine of counterinsurgency and a resulting program of counterinsurgency training was sorely felt. Chapter VI offers some reasons for why the Soviets succeeded in the earlier campaigns in spite of having no doctrinal preparation and yet failed in Afghanistan.

III. SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE RED ARMY VERSUS THE BASMACHI

One of the first challenges to Soviet power came in the form of an armed revolt in Russian Turkestan, a Central Asian province. The uprising against the Tashkent Soviet, and Turksovnarkom, the Soviet's committee on regional policy, quickly spread in early 1918 and became a prolonged resistance movement whose many parts became known collectively as the Basmachi.[27] The Basmachi uprising continued after the Red Army broke through the White forces that had isolated Central Asia for nearly two years and established Turkkomissia, the Turkestan Commission of the Russian Communist Party, in 1920 as the representative arm of the central government. The Basmachi, who had nearly destroyed the Tashkent Soviet, began to lose ground to the political measures of Turkkomissia and the effective

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[27]William S. Ritter, "The Final Phase in the Liquidation of Anti-Soviet Resistance in Tadzhikistan: Ibrahim Bek and the Basmachi, 1924-1931," Soviet Studies 37, no. 4 (October 1985): 491, identifies Basmachi as derived from the Turkish verb **basmak**, meaning "to oppress, to violate" and having been used before the Russian Revolution to name a variety of bandit groups that roamed the Central Asian countryside. After the revolution the term was used to describe the anti-Soviet guerrillas. This appears to have been a propaganda effort by the Soviets to brand the guerrillas as bandits but sources to be cited below demonstrate that the Soviets, although understandably reluctant to acknowledge it publicly, were aware of the national and religious motivations of the resistance.

military campaign of its Red Army regulars. Yet even under tremendous pressure the Basmachi uprising endured for three more years before widespread resistance ended. Even then, localized but vigorous resistance continued under Ibrahim Bek in eastern Bukhara and from bases in Afghanistan until 1931.

The Soviet struggle with the Basmachi passed through two phases. The first lasted from 13 December 1917, when the Union of Muslims announced the formation of the Kokand Autonomous Government in opposition to the Tashkent Soviet, until July 1920 when the Bolsheviks sent Turkkomissia to take over from the Tashkent Soviet.[28] This period was characterized by oppressive political policies backed by ineffective military force, the combination of the two only serving to provoke increased resistance.

The second phase began with the establishment of Turkkomissia as the central authority in Turkestan in 1920 and lasted, in two segments, until 1931. The first segment of Turkkomissia's campaign against the Basmachi lasted until 1924 when resistance on Soviet territory was essentially broken. The second segment lasted from 1924 until 1931 while the Soviets forced Ibrahim Bek onto Afghan territory and wore him down to his final defeat in 1931. Turkkomissia

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[28]Martha B. Olcott, "The Basmachi or Freemen's Revolt in Turkestan 1918-1924," Soviet Studies 33, no. 3 (July 1981): 354-357.

reversed many of the political policies of the discredited Tashkent Soviet, which had alienated most of the native population. The political moderation and concessions of Turkkomissia were supported by forceful and effective military operations. The Soviet counterinsurgency campaign after 1920 succeeded in separating the Basmachi from their popular support and in reclaiming and organizing territory under Soviet control. These measures struck at the central elements which are recognized today as essential to the viability of an insurgent movement.

A. THE TASHKENT SOVIET AND THE BASMACHI 1917-1920

Turkestan became part of the Russian Empire late in the nineteenth century and strong anti-Russian sentiment still existed among the natives by the time of the October Revolution. Major uprisings against Russian rule had taken place in 1898 and 1916.[29] Yet it was not inevitable that a third major uprising would develop in the anarchic wake of the revolution in Petrograd and Moscow. At least one major segment of the Moslem intelligentsia in Turkestan, the Ulema Jemyeti, voted to support the Tashkent Soviet and could have been instrumental in preventing an armed clash. The Tashkent Soviet set its self destructive course early,

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[29]See Michael Rywkin, Moscow's Muslin Challenge: Soviet Central Asia (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1982): 1-20, on Tsarist penetration into Central Asia and subsequent unrest.

however, by voting on 15 November 1917 to exclude all native Turkestanis since they "were not organized on a proletarian basis."[30]

This short-sighted policy, instituted by a Soviet composed of eight Socialist Revolutionaries and seven Bolsheviks in the name of, but in isolation from the Bolshevik central government, was developed in a strongly colonialist atmosphere with the support of most of the Russian population of Turkestan.[31] The minority Russians, isolated from European Russia and surrounded by a hostile population, apparently saw the issue in terms of survival or destruction with no room for compromise or conciliation.[32] Marie Broxup describes this period as one of, "political intransigence and terror," in which, "Survival was the only goal and the only ideal."[33]

The foundation of what would become a counterproductive policy was reinforced by the precarious strategic position of the Tashkent Soviet and of all the Russians in Turkestan. The Soviets had only one rail line into Turkestan and it was

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[30]Olcott, "The Basmachi or Freemen's Revolt in Turkestan 1918-1924," 354.

[31]Marie Broxup, "The Basmachi," Central Asian Review 2, no. 1 (1983): 65-66.

[32]E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, vol. 2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 330, gives the 1917 population of Turkestan as approximately 12 million, including 500,000 Russian immigrants.

[33]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 65-66.

cut in late 1917 by the Orenburg Cossacks under Dutov. The line remained cut, except for brief openings, for nearly two years. Famine and economic collapse resulted from the cessation of grain imports from Europe and exports of cotton and oil.[34] The cut rail communications were symptomatic of Turkestan's political and military isolation from the central government. Even if the line was open, the Bolsheviks were too hard pressed by the Whites to spare troops for Turkestan until well into 1919. These conditions must have hardened the anti-Moslem, neocolonialist outlook of the new Soviet government.

These factors all became important when the exclusionary vote of the Tashkent Soviet galvanized the Moslem intelligentsia against the government. The once ambivalent Moslem factions on 13 December 1917 established the Kokand Autonomous Government in the Fergana Valley, demanding, "autonomy within the Russian state with full national representation and self-rule for Turkestan."[35] The two governments competed for recognition from Moscow but, when the White blockade of the rail line at Orenburg was temporarily broken in January 1918, Moscow sent weapons and supplies to Tashkent. Resupplied Red Guard detachments from

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[34]E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, vol. 2, 331.

[35]"The Basmachis. The Central Asian Resistance Movement 1918-1924," Central Asian Review, 7, no. 3 (1959), 236, and Olcott, "The Basmachi," 354.

Tashkent attacked Kokand and sacked the city. The ensuing massacre is estimated to have cost the lives of 14,000 to 50,000 Moslem inhabitants of Kokand.[36] This revived the spirit of resistance that had flared-up in 1898 and 1916. Raids against Russian settlements and garrisons in Fergana developed into a resistance movement which eventually spread to Bukhara, the Lokay and Khiva regions, and Northern Afghanistan.[37] The policies and actions of Turksovnarkom had turned a surly and resentful but relatively quiescent populace into an active threat to Soviet rule in Central Asia.

1. Political Measures of Turksovnarkom's Counterinsurgency Campaign

The political and military measures used by Turksovnarkom to try to control Turkestan, as described by Marie Broxup, were embodied in the phrase: "Strike before you are attacked."[38] This kind of aggressiveness has a place, along with a balanced political approach, in counterinsurgency. But Turksovnarkom adopted this policy in

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[36]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 354-355 and Broxup, "The Basmachi," 59.

[37]The first four being the distinct geographic locations of the separate elements of the movement labeled as a whole as the "Basmachi," as identified by Broxup, "The Basmachi," 59. See Ritter, "The Final Phase in the Liquidation of Anti-Soviet Resistance in Tadzhikistan: Ibrahim Bek and the Basmachi, 1924-31," 484-493, on the period of Basmachi operations in Afghanistan.

[38]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 66.

spirit and practice immediately after coming to power and before any native uprising was evident. The alienative measures that sprang from this mentality inspired the formation of the Kokand Autonomous Government (K.A.G.) and fueled the resistance after the violent destruction of the K.A.G.

The Tashkent Soviet, by early December 1917, had declared the shariat (Koranic law) invalid, destroyed religious foundations and law-courts in Turkestan, and nationalized all land, including **waqf** lands (land owned by the clergy).[39] These measures were apparently, along with the earlier ruling excluding Moslems from the Soviet, an effort to decapitate the non-proletarian Moslem society in Turkestan and exert Soviet control.

However, rather than preventing resistance to Soviet rule, the new measures created it by transforming the Moslem perception of the Russian presence in Turkestan from resented colonialists to a revolutionary threat to their religious, political, social, and economic way of life.[40] The creation of the K.A.G. was the first manifestation of resistance to this threat. The armed uprising that followed

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[39]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 342 and "The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 236.

[40]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 352-353 contrasts the Tsarist colonialists policies that left Moslem society in Turkestan mostly unchanged with the revolutionary policies that the Tashkent Soviet tried to implement immediately.

the destruction of the K.A.G was further expression of resistance to the national discrimination and oppression of the Tashkent Soviet.[41] The confiscation of the Fergana cotton crop after the sacking of Kokand increased the economic hardship of the populace and fueled Moslem anger against the new Russian rulers. The combination of all these events and policies had a quick effect; by April 1918 Basmachi groups had formed in every town in Fergana. These independent groups began a campaign of arson, murder, and surprise attacks which reduced Soviet control to the main towns in Fergana and the railway.[42]

Basmachi pressure was so great that eventually the Tashkent Soviet was forced to consider political compromise with the rebels.[43] These half-hearted efforts to attract Moslem support met with no success, largely because the Soviet military continued to commit atrocities in the name of restoring order. On one hand, these operations undermined Turksovnarkom's political efforts by inspiring increased resentment. On the other hand, the operations, although repressive, were ineffective and did not discourage the Basmachi.

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[41]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 352 and "The Basmachis," Central Asian Review, 236.

[42]"The Basmachis," Central Asian Review, 237.

[43]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 68.

The political policies of the Tashkent Soviet were so unsuccessful that in January 1919 its commissar for war attempted a coup. When the coup failed, the conspirators briefly joined one of the major Basmachi leaders. Another segment of the Russian minority alienated by the Soviet was the "Russian Peasant Army," a peasant militia armed by the Soviets which, disgruntled with War Communism, allied itself with the Basmachi in the summer of 1919. This Basmachi-Russian alliance organized a second opposition government in September 1919, the Provisional Government of Fergana, and sought cooperation with other anti-Bolshevik groups as well as aid from Afghanistan.[44] The Tashkent Soviet was so inept that by mid-1919 it had inspired the formation of a growing anti-Soviet Moslem-Russian front which eventually gained control of most of the Fergana Valley. In spite of the disorganization and occasional open hostility between the Basmachi factions, the Soviet appeared near defeat and it seems unlikely that it could have survived much longer had the forces of the central government not reached Turkestan in late 1919.

2. Military Measures of Turkesovnarkom's Counterinsurgency Campaign

The Tashkent Soviet's military campaign against the Basmachi was limited by two factors: strategic isolation from possible reinforcements and resupply from the central

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[44]"The Basmachis," Central Asian Review, 238.

government, and limited military forces in Turkestan itself. This situation seemed to dictate a defensive posture. However, the aggressive political programs of the Soviet and their stimulation of the resistance demanded an offensive military strategy. The result was a strategy with a dual nature that fit neither the demands of the political situation nor the reality of the strategic situation.

The Tashkent Soviet had approximately 21,215 troops available to fight the Basmachi by mid-1919. The Basmachi numbered between 10,000-30,000 during the same period.[45] Besides limited numbers, the Soviet troops were constrained by widely varying capabilities, some quite limited, and problems of interoperability between the disparate forces. The Soviet forces were made up of regular Red Army units (11 regiments of infantry and cavalry), some small pre-revolutionary units, one Tatar regiment, Red Guard units made up of Russian peasant, Russian worker's militia, some minority units and some Muslim units that often switched allegiances. Some international regiments manned by German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war were the most effective fighting units but must have further complicated the command and control problems of this patchwork army.[46]

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[45]See Broxup, "The Basmachi," 60 and 67, for estimates of Soviet troop strength and numbers of Basmachi. See also Olcott, "The Basmachi," 355 for numbers of Basmachi in 1919.

[46]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 67.

The offensive efforts of the anti-Basmachi forces were characterized by large-scale operations aimed at forcing the Basmachi to fight in the open. The highly mobile Basmachi avoided decisive confrontation with large forces. Perhaps out of frustration, the Soviet forces began to shoot peasants suspected of collaborating with the rebels. These methods, along with cavalry raids on villages, looting by the poorly disciplined troops, burdensome requisitioning, and various atrocities constituted the offensive against the Basmachi. Quite understandably, they failed to cause substantial harm to the Basmachi but helped their cause by further alienating the populace from the regime.[47]

Political desire for an offensive strategy could not overcome the limitations of the Soviet forces and so they were forced mostly to pursue a defensive strategy. The main effort was to preserve control of the rail line, the major towns and Tashkent. But the small, inefficient Soviet force could not withstand the rebel pressure generated by the political ineptitude of Turksovnarkom. The Soviets gradually lost control of most of the territory of the Fergana Valley and then, in succession, the towns of eastern and southeastern Fergana. Even a major portion of the rail line in eastern Fergana fell into Basmachi hands and was

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[47]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 66-69, and Rywkin, Moscow's Muslim Challenge, 34-35.

destroyed. The Soviet forces, concentrating on defense of the cities and pursuit of the Basmachi forces, made no effort to occupy territory and organize it against the rebels.[48]

By late 1919 the Tashkent Soviet had nearly brought about its own destruction. It had failed politically and militarily against the Basmachi and the Red Army reinforcements sent in September must have been meant more to save Bolshevik power in Turkestan rather than to rescue the thoroughly discredited Tashkent Soviet.[49]

B. TURKKOMISSIA AND THE BASMACHI 1920-1924

By mid-year in 1919 the central government was confident enough to turn its attention to the Turkestan problem. The renewed Bolshevik interest became evident when the Party Central Committee began to try to steer the Tashkent Soviet via telegrams starting in July.[50] Also in July, the government for the first time dispatched significant forces

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[48]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 237-238, Olcott, "The Basmachi," 355-357, and Broxup, "The Basmachi," 67-68.

[49]The deep dissatisfaction of the central government with the Tashkent Soviet is evident in Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 333-335. Also, G. Safarov, Kolonial'naia Revolutsia-Opy Turkestann (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1921); quoted in Broxup, "The Basmachi," 66; describes the members of the Tashkent Soviet as, "adventurers, careerists and plain criminal elements...who were determined by all means, to preserve and extend the privileges enjoyed by the Russian proletariat in Turkestan."

[50]Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 334.

to reclaim Turkestan. White forces remained a threat, however, and Frunze's Fifth Army did not reach Tashkent until mid-1920 but the Soviet Combined Kazan Regiment under the command of A.P. Sokolov was able to reach Tashkent before Frunze.[51] In September 1919 Sokolov's forces restored communications between Moscow and Turkestan and fresh troops began to reclaim Fergana. Osh and Dzhalal-Abad, two major towns in eastern Fergana were retaken by the end of the month.[52]

The reassertion of central political authority quickly followed the new intrusion of military power. The Central Committee sent the new Turkestan Commission (Turkkomissia) to Tashkent in October. It is clear that Turkkomissia took control of the situation immediately although it coexisted with the Tashkent Soviet from October 1919 to July 1920. The complete reversal of the Soviet's political decisions, immediate military gains and quick deterioration of the Basmachi's position confirms Turkkomissia's dominance during this period. The rapid turnaround of the situation also sealed the fate of the discredited Tashkent Soviet. In July Moscow directed that that maladroit body be disbanded and

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[51]Joseph L. Wieczynski, ed., The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History, vol. 3 (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1977), s.v., "Basmachi Revolt," by Fred R. Belk.

[52]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 238; and Olcott, "The Basmachi," 356-357.

replaced with a Provisional Central Committee that included Turkestani natives.[53]

1. Turkkomissia's Political Measures

Turkkomissia replaced the narrow colonialist interests of Turksovnarkom with the grander Soviet goal of retention of Russian empire. This allowed the ineffective measures of the fearful colonialists to be replaced with the more sophisticated and far sighted programs of the revolutionaries representing the central government. The political half of the Bolshevik campaign against the Basmachi therefore took on an entirely new complexion after 1919; the provocative political intransigence of Turksovnarkom was abandoned in favor of expedient concessions.

Turkkomissia recognized the necessity for political, as well as military, defeat of the rebels.[54] The commission therefore began immediately to improve the image of Soviet power in Turkestan. The most chauvinistic elements of Russian power were ousted and replaced with more "internationalist" minded minority members from Moscow.[55] Communist Party membership was opened to native Moslems, even those who were merely sympathetic to Party goals but

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[53]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 357.

[54]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 357.

[55]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 66.

not necessarily devout communists. The new approach of winning over the natives instead of crushing them became evident in January 1920 when, "the first 'Red train' left Moscow for Turkestan with a full complement of propagandists and literature in the local languages."[56] The Bolsheviks also deployed a brigade of Tatars in Fergana aimed at winning over their co-religionists through propaganda, if possible, instead of military action.[57]

The commission also worked to relieve the conditions of famine and economic dislocation that had developed during the civil war and which fueled the rebellion. Grain shipments and economic assistance to Turkestan were started and food was once again distributed equitably between Russians and natives. The reopened bazaars and the renewal of legalized private trading also helped to improve conditions and undermine the Basmachi cause. These economic measures were strengthened and their political worth increased by the initiation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in March 1921. Land reform and a decreased tax burden followed in the wake of NEP liberalization.[58] The cumulative effect of these disparate measures was to cause the native

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[56]Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 335.

[57]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 239.

[58]See Olcott, "The Basmachi," 357 and "The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 239.

population, "genuinely to believe that the era of terror of Turksovnarkom was over."[59]

Turksovnarkom was cast further into the shadows by the almost immediate success of Turkkomissia's new policies. By mid-January 1920 the Russian Peasant Army had negotiated a truce with the Soviet forces and abandoned the Basmachi cause. During January and February Basmachi surrendered in groups as large as 3000. In a model of effective political-military cooperation against insurgents, the Red Army forces in Fergana had bided their time in defensive operations while political and economic measures whittled away Basmachi support and strength. Then, after the Basmachi had been divided and weakened, the army attacked the main remaining force and defeated it. The result was that all but one Basmachi leader surrendered during March.[60]

Turkkomissia did not end all unpopular measures, however, and labor and military conscription continued in Fergana. Requisitions of food and property also continued to fuel unrest. Conditions were therefore right for a flare-up of Basmachi activity when the Soviets attacked Bukhara in September 1920 and installed a Young Bukharan Government in place of the deposed Emir.[61] The Basmachi

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[59]Broxup, The Basmachi, 70.

[60]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 239.

[61]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 240.

uprising was reinvigorated in Fergana and spread to Eastern Bukhara as a result of the Soviet attack.

The Soviets answered the renewed challenge with a combination of new political measures and increased military pressure. Beginning in August 1921 amnesty and homesteads were offered to Basmachi who surrendered and the Bolshevik image as a direct threat to Islam was softened by restoring Shari'a law in October 1921.[62] In addition to making concessions on Islam, Turkkomissia circulated propaganda aimed at discrediting the religious leadership as, "reactionary and unreliable." The result was that some religious leaders were won over by Soviet concessions while others were alienated from the populace by propaganda. One writer describes the effect of this astute, low cost campaign:

> ...the coopting of Muslim clergy and the use by the Bolshevik government of outside Muslim troops against local Muslims struck a severe psychological blow to the Basmachis. This factor lessened Islam as a driving force and ultimately led to a loss of spirit among the resistance together with a depletion of support in the countryside.[63]

These measures and the arrival of two more Soviet divisions in September created a bleak outlook for the rebels. Yet the Basmachi cause was revitalized once again,

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[62]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 357.

[63]Eden Naby, "The Concept of Jihad in Opposition to Communist Rule: Turkestan and Afghanistan," Studies in Comparative Communism 19, no. 3/4 (Autumn/Winter 1986), 292-293.

this time by the arrival in Bukhara in November 1921 of the dynamic Pan Turkic leader, Enver Pasha.

Between November 1921 and August 1922 Enver expanded the Basmachi forces in Bukhara, reformed their command structure, established cooperation and supply routes between Basmachi factions in Fergana and Bukhara, and regularized Basmachi contact with supporters in Afghanistan. His forces were able to turn the tide in early 1922 and regain control of most of the countryside of Eastern and Western Bukhara.

The Basmachi resurgence was short-lived, however, in the face of the Bolshevik response. Major concessions regarding waqf lands, Shari'a courts, legalization of Koran schools, and programs indicating general Bolshevik tolerance of Islam were instituted in May 1922 in response to Enver's successes. Amnesty offers were renewed, this time with guarantees of limited tribal autonomy.[64] These programs eroded popular support for the Basmachis while a strong Red Army offensive pushed Enver's forces out of Eastern Bukhara, recapturing one town after another and isolating him from the populace. By July, Soviet pressure on Kabul forced the recall to Afghanistan of the Afghan volunteers who had supplemented Enver's forces. Finally, on 4 August, Enver

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[64]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 358-360.

Pasha was killed in battle with Red Army forces in Eastern Bukhara.[65]

Heavy military pressure gradually forced the remaining Basmachi out of Bukhara and Fergana where effective resistance was crushed by early 1923. Resistance in Bukhara lasted until the end of 1924 when nothing but insignificant, scattered bands of rebels were all that remained. The smaller areas of Basmachi activity in the Khiva and Lokay regions were also brought under Soviet control by the end of 1924. Those Basmachi leaders who were not captured or killed fled to Afghanistan. One such leader, Ibrahim Bek, continued to launch attacks from Afghanistan against Soviet rule in Turkestan until he was finally captured and executed in 1931.[66] But by 1924 the Moslem threat to Soviet rule in Central Asia was defeated.

The Soviets ensured that the sporadic acts of resistance that continued to occur did not develop into a second general uprising by enacting the "cantonization" of Central Asia. The region was politically and administratively fragmented by subdivision into republics

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[65]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 245.

[66]See William S. Ritter, "The Final Phase in the Liquidation of Anti-Soviet Resistance in Tadzhikistan: Ibrahim Bek and the Basmachi, 1924-1931," Soviet Studies 37, no. 4 (October 1985): 484-493.

and ethnic states.[67] Then, having raised sufficient barriers to cohesion between the various Moslem groups, the Bolsheviks returned to the anti-Islam policies which Turksovnarkom had begun. In 1925 the central government began a program of sovietization in Central Asia that included the gradual withdrawal of the various concessions and expedient measures taken during the uprising. Waqf lands were seized again, shari'a courts closed, and, by 1929, Koran schools were banned.[68]

2. The Military Aspect of Turkkomissia's Anti-Basmachi Campaign

Under Turkkomissia, the pattern of misguided, ineffective military action was reversed and the tide of gradual Basmachi encroachment was turned. The new representatives of the central government, unlike their predecessors on Turksovnarkom, recognized the necessity for coordinated political and military action against the rebels. These ideas were shared by the Red Army commanders sent to conduct operations against the Basmachi. Writing in 1926, Marshal Tukhachevsky, who commanded the 1st Army of Frunze's Turkestan Front against the Basmachi, expressed the views held by those who had controlled military operations

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[67]See Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 41-44; and Olaf Caroe, Soviet Empire (St. Martin's Press, 1967), 143-149.

[68]Olcott, "The Basmachi," 361.

in Central Asia at the start of the Basmachi uprising:

> To liquidate a peasant uprising, there is a need, besides military actions, for a broad political campaign to explain the peasant's true interests....Military actions should be closely combined with political and economic measures and be accompanied by an explanation as to why such measures are employed in the interests of unity between workers and peasants....From the national point of view, banditry, or the Basmachi movement, becomes even more complicated because of the necessity of outlining and putting into practice a correct national policy...the Soviet power has to reckon not only with the national but also with the religious composition of the local population.[69]

This represented a convergence of political and military opinions on how to defeat the Basmachi that is almost unique (at least all too rare) in the history of counterinsurgency. The political leadership was sufficiently ruthless and aware of military capabilities and the military leadership was politically sophisticated enough for the two to find a common ground in the anti-Basmachi struggle. Osipov's attempted coup illustrates Turksovnarkom's failure along these lines. The result was that once the military threats to Bolshevik power in Central Europe were eliminated, the Basmachi faced an enemy with unified political-military goals and sufficient military power to achieve them.

The increase in Soviet military power after late 1919 was tremendous, adding 110,000, "well-trained,

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[69]Mikhail Tukhachevsky, "The Struggle Against Banditry," in: The Guerrilla Reader, ed. Walter LaQuer (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), 180-182.

well-armed, disciplined veterans under the command of the best Soviet military leaders," to the 20,000-30,000 Turksovnarkom troops. Frunze's Turkestan Front was organized into two armies, the 4th and the 1st, as well as special Cheka units, and was equipped with 929 machineguns and 99 field guns. Armored cars, armored trains and aircraft added to Red Army striking power. During this time the rebels numbered no more than 20,000 men, divided among several fragmented and often isolated groups.[70] And while Basmachi troop losses were not easily replaced, the Bolsheviks had no lack of military manpower with which to reinforce the Turkestan Front. On 1 October 1920 the Red Army had 5,498,000 mobilized troops. As European threats to Soviet power faded, these forces were gradually demobilized but by 1 October 1924 the Red Army still numbered 529,865.[71]

Although the political and military leadership of Turkkomissia expressed a preference to win over the population by propaganda, the Bolsheviks were willing to use overwhelming force against those who resisted. Marshal

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[70]In the earliest example of the Soviet's heavy reliance on firepower and the latest technology, even against under-equipped, untrained guerrillas, Frunze's anti-guerrilla forces, "pioneered in the employment of both airborne troops and aircraft to suppress poorly armed native forces," during the Basmachi uprising. See Aleksander N. Lapchinskiy, "The Organization and Use of Airborne Landing Parties," in: The Soviet Art of War, ed. Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 64-65. See Broxup, "The Basmachi," 68-69 for Turkestan Front force composition.

[71]Erickson, The Soviet High Command, 763.

Tukhachevsky's writings on the campaign against the Basmachi betray the ruthlessness of the Bolsheviks in crushing the rebellion:

> While an uprising in a city can easily be liquidated through a speedy concentration of the necessary forces and means, and while all the superiority of contemporary military technology can be put to use there, in the village this frequently proves to no avail. The air force does not see a thing apart from peasants working in the field; the artillery has no target to fire at, etc.[72]

For Tukhachevsky, counterinsurgent warfare was challenging not because it was difficult to sort out combatants from non-combatants (a constant dilemma for Western counterinsurgency forces) but because the enemy was too scattered for aircraft and artillery to target them--as opposed to a general uprising in a city, which one can simply level. This statement on the problems of fighting the Basmachi highlights two other points--once again, the Soviet emphasis on technology and maximum firepower. Secondly, it demonstrates that Turksovnarkom was discredited not for its campaign of terror against the Muslims but because, by miscalculating the correlation of forces, it failed in its terror campaign and almost lost Soviet control of Central Asia as a consequence. Taken together, it all serves to illustrate that although the Bolsheviks made whatever political concessions they felt necessary, they persuaded with a chain mail fist, not a kid glove. The

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[72]Tukhachevsky, "Banditry," 179-180.

nature of the military campaign against the Basmachi therefore had two sides: close integration with the propaganda programs and political maneuvers of the political leadership on the one hand, and on the other hand, ruthless use of overwhelming force in support of the same political programs or in their stead when they failed.

While the Turksovnarkom forces had attempted to engage the elusive Basmachi in battle but made no effort to occupy and organize reclaimed territory, Frunze's Turkestan Front concentrated on occupying territory and organizing native militias and party cadres to defend it against the rebels. The Bolsheviks also recognized that the Basmachi would have to be cutoff from their supporters in Afghanistan. The Red Army forces therefore concentrated on closing the Afghan border to rebel activity until 1922 when military and diplomatic pressure forced a withdrawal of Afghan support.[73]

The writings of Marshal Tukhachevsky describe the methods used to separate the Basmachi from their popular support. In addition to organizing reclaimed territory, the Bolsheviks used a system of "large-scale repression and ...incentives." Collective responsibility, a Bolshevik standby for crushing resistance, was also used against Basmachi sympathizers and supporters, i.e., whole families

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[73]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 69.

could be punished for the misdeeds of one member. According to Tukhachevsky, the reorganization of territories laid the ground work for the "campaign of extirpation." Once an intelligence network had been established and identified Basmachi supporters, sympathizers, and family members, Tukhachevsky wrote that "the purge of the population will take place in complete congruence with the action of the Red Army."[74] The "purge of the population", another oft-used Soviet method for defeating resistance, could be accomplished through a variety of means including imprisonment, execution, starvation of the countryside to force emigration or migration to Soviet controlled cities, or military pressure to force the same.[75]

The Bolsheviks assigned the dual role of occupation army and counterinsurgent force to the Turkestan Front.[76]

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[74]Tukhachevsky, "Banditry," 184.

[75]See "The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 246 for an example of Soviet use of food as a weapon against the rebels. Michael Rywkin, Moscow's Muslim Challenge, Soviet Central Asia (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1982): 42-43 writes that 200,000 inhabitants of Tadzhikistan, the center of the Basmachi resistance, had fled to Afghanistan by 1925, leaving two-thirds of the arable land fallow. The conflict in Uzbekistan left one quarter of the arable land abandoned. Broxup, "The Basmachi," 70-71, estimates that as many as one million refugees left for Afghanistan. The same policy would be taken to a devastating extreme in AFghanistan where 6,000,000 Afghanis would be forced by the war into refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan.

[76]In "The Struggle Against Banditry," 183, Marshal Tukhachevsky wrote that "armed forces act in two ways: first by carrying out tasks of an army of occupation stationed in garrisons in order to safeguard the corresponding administrative Soviet bodies and their work; secondly, as a

This was a more reasoned approach than the non-strategy of constant pursuit of the Basmachi used by the undermanned Tashkent Soviet and, once the occupation programs divided and weakened the Basmachi, it allowed the Turkkomissia forces to attack with overwhelming superiority. During the Turkkomissia phase of the conflict battles with force ratios of ten to one and even 17 to one favoring the Red Army were recorded.[77] Enver Pasha was reputed to have been killed

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raiding force against the active bands." This approach, securing the base before taking the offensive, is more compatible with the conservative Soviet style of war and appears in each Soviet counterinsurgent campaign. Apparently the soviets had forgotten many of the lessons of the struggle against the Basmachi by the time they invaded Afghanistan but after a period of adjustment many of the lessons of Central Asia were applied to the new war, including a dual approach (occupation and counterinsurgency) to the anti-Mujahidin campaign as described by Alex Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan (Santa Monica: Rand, May 1988, R-3627-A): 20-34. Yet, as noted below, the Soviets were never as effective in the counterinsurgent role in Afghanistan as they had been in Turkestan. Broxup, "The Basmachi," 70, suggests that the "revolutionary enthusiasm" of the Red Army troops of the 1920's gave them an edge that the Soviet troops in Afghanistan did not have.

[77]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 69. Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, notes that in Afghanistan, the "Soviet command seems to have become especially sensitive to losses," and made "efforts to keep casualties at a minimum...such historically atypical behavior would indicate that there are at least some political constraints, real or perceived, that affect the Soviet army's operational decisionmaking in Afghanistan at present." However, the conservative approach and preoccupation with overwhelming force ratios that the Bolsheviks displayed in Turkestan suggest that Soviet sensitivity to losses in Afghanistan was only "historically atypical" in relation to Soviet style in conventional warfare as, exemplified by World War II, and may be "typical" Soviet style in some counterinsurgent wars.

along with his entire group of 25 other Basmachi in a battle with 300 Red Army troops.[78]

C. THE MEANING OF SOVIET VICTORY IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Basmachi cause which nearly defeated Turksovnarkom during 1918-1919 appears, in retrospect, to have been hopeless after late 1919. The inability of the Basmachi to develop a unified front allowed the Bolsheviks to capture the political issues of the conflict and to defeat militarily the rebel groups in detail. The party was a wedge driven between the Basmachi and the people and the Red Army drove the wedge in firmly, crushing the Basmachi in the process. Still, the resilience of the Basmachi through six years of war with a powerful enemy (13 years, if the sporadic attacks between 1924 and 1931 by Basmachi based in Afghanistan are counted) is as interesting as the reasons for their ultimate defeat.[79] Yet the main lesson that the Soviets seem to have taken away from their victory over the Basmachi was "that a Muslim guerrilla war is not a dangerous one and can easily be won."[80]

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[78]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 245-246.

[79]Martha Olcott, "The Basmachi," tends to focus on the endurance of the resistance movement in spite of their ultimate defeat while Broxup, "The Basmachi," pays more attention to Soviet success.

[80]Broxup, "The Basmachi," 71.

Several facts support this point. Most evident is the fact, described above, that the Soviets had not incorporated counterinsurgent warfare into their theory or doctrine of war by the time they invaded Afghanistan. Even the historical lessons of the Basmachi uprising had grown obscure to the Soviets by 1979.[81] The early mistakes and the length of the conflict were apparently forgotten in the flush of the final, crushing victory. Ironically, the party that places so much stock in its "scientific approach" to history consigned the costly lessons of the struggle with the Basmachi to the "dustbin of history" until necessity forced their retrieval 60 years later.

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[81]Alexander Bennisen, The Soviet Union and Muslim Guerrilla Wars, 1920-1921 (Santa Monica: Rand, August 1981, N-1707/1, 1-4, argues that, by 1981, the Soviets had not applied any of the lessons of the Basmachi uprising to their situation in Afghanistan.

IV. SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY IN LITHUANIA AND THE UKRAINE

In 1944, as the Red Army pushed the Germans westward, the Soviets were faced with the task of reasserting control over the western borderlands. This proved to be especially difficult in the Ukraine and in Lithuania where smoldering nationalism had erupted into anti-Soviet uprisings during the German invasion and had evolved into armed resistance movements. In both cases, the Germans, who had at first been looked upon as liberators, dashed hopes for independence and thereafter suffered from anti-occupation nationalist campaigns.

Upon reclaiming the territories, the Soviets therefore faced well developed resistance movements in the Ukraine and the Baltic which looked upon the Red Army, as they had the Germans, as an occupation force. Even while the Germans still occupied their land the Lithuanians and Ukrainians did not welcome Soviet partisans as fellow collaborators against the Nazis.[82] Instead, they were correctly perceived as the

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[82]Soviet leaders had ordered the formation of anti-German partisan units in the first desperate days after the German invasion. Khrushchev, then head of the Ukrainian Communist Party, gave detailed instructions on partisan organization to provincial party chiefs in late June, 1941. In a radio address to the Russian people in early July, Stalin ordered that guerrilla units be formed to harass the advancing Germans. As the war progressed, the Soviet partisan units were placed under the command of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement with NKVD and army group and army level partisan sections as the intermediate command levels.

advance guard of the Soviet oppressors. As a result, the Soviet partisans received little or no help in Lithuania where the resistance concentrated mostly on political agitation of non-cooperation with the Germans. In the Western Ukraine, where the resistance movement was using guerrilla warfare as well as political measures against the Germans, the Soviet partisans were attacked by Ukrainian insurgents.

Although they had similar origins, occurred at the same time, and shared the common goal of national independence, it is important to note that the uprisings in Lithuania and in the West Ukraine were separate insurgencies. Lithuania and the Ukraine are ethnically distinct from each other and from Russia, they have separate histories, different languages and dissimilar cultures. Their territories are not contiguous. Although their resistance movements shared similar goals and developed tenuous contact, this never resulted in coordinated activities or any perceptible benefit to either the Lithuanian or Ukrainian insurgents. These distinctions are blurred, however, by the fact that the Soviets apparently saw no difference between the two national uprisings and used nearly identical methods in defeating them. The Soviets did not adapt their policies to

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Specially trained liaison teams were dispatched by Moscow to ensure Soviet control of the partisans. Robert B. Asprey, War in the Shadows (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1975): 443-447 and 458-461.

the different regions and, in fact, often implemented elements of their pacification programs, such as de-kulakization and mass deportations, simultaneously in Lithuania and the West Ukraine.[83]

This makes it useful and convenient to consider the separate insurgencies together especially since they share parallel histories after 1944. But this is not just a convenient device; it illustrates that under certain conditions the Soviets will forego efforts to respond to national distinctions (e.g., consideration of cultural and religious factors in the campaign against the Basmachi) and will apply blunt, generic methods in destroying an insurgency. Yet a pattern of Soviet counterinsurgency begins to emerge when other elements of their campaigns in Lithuania and the Ukraine are considered. Similarities with the Basmachi campaign such as development of a party apparatus, use of propaganda, collectivization, terror, and application of force are some of the elements that reappear in the post-WW II campaigns.

A. SOVIET POLITICAL METHODS IN LITHUANIA AND THE UKRAINE

Upon their return to Lithuania and the Western Ukraine the Soviets faced opposition from organized nationalist

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[83]Kestutis Girnius, "Collectivization of Lithuanian Agriculture, 1944-1950," Soviet Studies 40, no. 3 (July 1988), 461.

movements with bitter memories of Soviet occupation. Although the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic had existed since 1923, the territories of the Western Ukraine had been a part of Poland until the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact permitted annexation by the Soviets in 1939.[84] The Soviet crackdown on Ukrainian political parties and the NKVD execution of as many as 10,000 political prisoners at the time of the Red Army's retreat in 1941 resulted in the formation of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) under Stepan Bandera and ensured West Ukrainian hostility towards the returning Soviets.[85]

The Lithuanian experience was made even more bitter since they had enjoyed 20 years of independence before the Soviet invasion on 15 June 1940, which was immediately followed by the mass deportation of 30,000 Lithuanians to Siberia.[86] Resistance was organized under the aegis of the Lithuanian Activist Front in October 1940.[87] The OUN developed its military arm, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and began organized armed resistance against the

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[84]Yuriy Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in the Ukraine (New York: Society of Veterans of Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Inc., 1972), 10-20.

[85]Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr M. Nekrich, Utopia in Power (New York: Summit Books, 1982), 453.

[86]Girnius, "Collectivization," 462.

[87]K.V. Taurus, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast (New York: Voyages Press, 1962), 21.

Germans in late 1942 and had its first clashes with Soviet partisans in early 1943.[88] Although the LAF had not begun widespread armed resistance yet, when the Soviets returned to Lithuania in April 1944 the NKVD Commissar of State Security for Lithuania noted extensive distribution of counter-revolutionary leaflets.[89]

The Moscow emissaries sent to defeat the anti-Soviet insurgencies were both future Kremlin luminaries. Mikhail Suslov, future party ideologist, and Nikita Khrushchev, future general secretary, took charge of the situations in Lithuania and the Ukraine, respectively. Their common goals were to rebuild the party structures, begin recovery from the war, and destroy the resistance movements. As prime minister and first secretary of the Ukraine, Khrushchev's responsibilities were broader than Suslov's. However, the two faced different challenges; the LFA network encompassed all of Lithuania while the UPA network was not as well developed but covered a much larger territory than all of Lithuania.[90]

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[88]Enrique Martinez Codo, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Ukraine," Military Review 40, no. 8 (November 1960), 4; and Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare, 1972.

[89]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 22.

[90]Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, trans. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970): 227-244; and Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 73-94.

Nevertheless, the political campaigns against the LFA and UPA had similar characteristics from the start. In a move that echoed the Soviet characterization of the Basmachi as bandits, Suslov and Khrushchev both referred to the insurgents of the LFA and UPA as bandits and Nazi sympathizers. The LFA insurgents were labeled as "Hitlerite helpers" and Khrushchev coined the phrase "Ukrainian-German nationalist" to link the UPA to the Nazi occupiers.[91] This was a characteristic theme carried through counterinsurgent campaign in an effort to shift the burden of guilt for wartime devastation and destruction onto the resistance movements. It failed, however, to achieve its goal of driving a wedge between the people and their liberation movements. In both cases, the insurgents enjoyed widespread support. This was especially true in Lithuania where the LFA had well-developed networks of informers, underground presses, and large numbers of Lithuanians appointed to official posts by the Soviets but willing to aid the cause. The UPA, while it enjoyed widespread support in the Western Ukraine, never extended its activities on a long-term basis into the East. Yet while the UPA did not have the extensive support that the LFA did, Khrushchev overstates the loyalty

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[91]Frederic Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," in: Combat on Communist Territory, ed. Charles Moser (Lake Bluff, Illinois: Free Congress Foundation, 1985), 10; and David R. Marples, "The Kulak in Post-War USSR: The West Ukrainian Example," Soviet Studies 36, no. 4 (October 1984), 563.

of the Ukrainians to the Soviet state in his memoirs and even goes so far as to omit any mention of the UPA.[92]

Besides needing to overcome the effective propaganda networks of the insurgents, the Soviet propaganda campaign had the reputation of the Soviets themselves to overcome, a formidable task. The Lithuanians saw "mass arrests, deportations, terror and murder...returning with the Soviet tanks."[93] At the same time, "the Soviet authorities (in the Ukraine)...did not manage to create serious class divisions...but they did create an attitude of hostility among the peasantry...."[94] Yet this does not seem to have greatly concerned the Soviets and this differentiates the campaigns in Lithuania and the Ukraine from the struggle with the Basmachi; the Soviets seemed less concerned with affecting the attitudes of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian population through propaganda and expedient political concessions than they had 20 years before with the Muslims of Central Asia. Instead, they committed sufficient manpower resources to Lithuania and the Ukraine to strangle the opposition in spite of anti-Soviet resentment and continued nationalist sentiment.

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[92]Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, 229.

[93]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 32.

[94]Marples, "The Kulak," 568.

This is not to say that the Soviets neglected party work and re-education as means of pacifying the regions. During the first three months after the Red Army reclaimed Lithuania, the Soviets dispatched 1000 party loyalists into the countryside to begin building district and party committees. In spite of LFA imposed boycotts of elections, by 1947 87.8 percent of delegates to the Supreme Soviet were Lithuanian and over 65 percent of Komsomol secretaries were Lithuanian by 1949. Still, by 1948 Lithuanians only represented 18.6 percent of membership in the Lithuanian Communist Party and many who accepted appointments either neglected their jobs or cooperated with the LFA. Lithuanians were slow to cooperate since the Soviets were still perceived as occupiers. In addition, the LFA targeted party activists for assassination, killing, by their own estimate 4000 Communist activists between 1945 and 1952.[95]

In the Ukraine, where the east was relatively secure from insurgent activity and a party structure was quickly revived, Khrushchev concentrated on "re-education," sending 6000 Russian and East Ukrainian teachers to the West Ukraine in 1945. The UPA began a program to protect Ukrainian culture in schools in 1947 by pressuring teachers to teach

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[95]Girnius, "The Collectivization of Lithuanian Agriculture, 1944-1950," 462-463; and Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 52.

in Ukrainian and give a nationalist slant to history and geography instruction.[96]

The only other relatively benign political measure used against the resistance movements was amnesty offers designed to weaken insurgent resolve and thin their ranks without costing the lives of Communist forces. In both cases the first amnesty offer was the most effective, gaining the surrender of the least committed insurgents immediately. In the Ukraine, the Soviets made six amnesty offers between 1944 and 1947. The most successful was the May 1945 offer which gained the surrender of the thousands who had joined the UPA only to avoid the Soviet manpower mobilization. Other amnesty campaigns met with little success.[97] The first amnesty offer in Lithuania was made in February 1946. The LFA gives no number for those who accepted the amnesty but does admit that the departure eased some supply problems, hinting at significant numbers of defectors.[98]

In spite of efforts to propagandize and re-educate, the Soviets relied much more heavily on political intimidation and terror in the Ukraine and Lithuania than

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[96]Oleh Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," Ukrainian Review 30, no. 3 (1982), 17.

[97]Heller, Utopia in Power, 454; and Petro R. Sodol, "The Ukraine Insurgent Army," Strategy and Tactics (September/ October, 1985), 12.

[98]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 80-82.

they had in Turkestan during the twenties. There is much less evidence (in fact, almost none) of Soviet efforts to placate the populations in the Ukraine and Baltic area with the kind of political concessions made to the Moslim insurgents. Collective responsibility was revived in both campaigns as a device to separate the LFA and UPA from their support. Mass arrests, executions, deportations, and show trials were all elements of the campaigns of terror against both national groups.[99] The NKVD network of informers helped sustain the atmosphere of terror and presented one of the greatest challenges to the resistance movements. However, in the Ukraine, where NKVD infiltration efforts often failed, the Soviets often resorted to destruction of entire villages and mass deportations.[100]

Mass deportations had become a standard measure of the Stalinist system anyway, and had appeared in both

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[99]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 33-34; and Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in the Ukraine, 280.

[100]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 49 and 80-82 describes the vulnerability of the LFA to infiltration by the NKVD and the LFA's preoccupation with NKVD activity. Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 282-284 describes NKVD infiltration of the UPA, factories, collective farms, and schools and their enforcement of collective responsibility. The term NKVD is used throughout this paper for the sake of clarity and simplicity. During the period in question the NKVD went through several reorganizations as the NKGB, MGB-MVD, and KI but the functions of the secret police forces and internal security troops engaged in Lithuania and the Ukraine did not change; Harriet Fast Schott and William F. Scott, The Armed Forces of the USSR (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979): 218-219.

Lithuania and the Ukraine immediately after their Soviet takeovers in 1939 and 1940. Once the Soviets reoccupied the two regions deportations reappeared as an instrument of political control. In Turkestan forced migration to Afghanistan had served the same purpose that mass deportations now served for the Soviets. In the earlier case, the Soviets desired only to remove undesirable elements from their territory; the Ukrainians and Lithuanians would remain on Soviet territory as slave labor in Siberia.

Mass deportations were conducted under the guise of enforcement of collectivization and dekulakization, themes of the anti-Basmachi campaign. Collectivization and dekulakization were useful in expropriating undesirable elements of the population and in cowing those who remained behind. Eight mass deportations were conducted in Lithuania between 1945 and 1950, resulting in the relocation of 350,000 people (more than 10 percent of the population.[101] Between 500,000-800,000 (six percent of the population) in the Ukraine was deported in October 1947.[102] Of all their non-military measures against the UPA and the LFA, the Soviet's collectivization programs may have been the most damaging. In spite of the insurgents' efforts to disrupt

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[101]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 59.

[102]Marples, "The Kulak in Post-War USSR," 566.

collectivization the program continued and made it increasingly difficult for the insurgents of both regions to obtain food.[103]

An interesting aspect of collectivization in the Ukraine was that it was among the first actions that the Soviets took against the Uniate (Catholic) Church. The 1944 directive that began land reform included churches on the list of those to be expropriated.[104] This action was followed in 1945 by the imprisonment and deportation of church officials including Metropolitan Slipyi, bishops, priests, and theological students. Finally the Uniate church was forced into union with the Russian Orthodox Church in March 1946.[105] This was a significant departure from the efforts to win over the Muslim clergy through concessions to Islam carried out by Turkkomissia in Turkestan.

A final element of the land reform program was the Soviet's efforts through dekulakization to create a class war in both regions. They hoped to turn the resistance into a civil war by creating artificial class distinctions and antagonisms through taxation and redistribution of land and property. However, the peasant populations were essentially

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[103]Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 14.

[104]Marples, "The Kulak in Post-War USSR," 563.

[105]Martovych, "Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 7.

homogeneous in terms of wealth and UPA and LFA pressure against participation added to the peasant's natural disinclination to take their neighbor's land so the frictions the Soviets hoped to exploit never arose.[106]

The Soviets were able to carry out their campaign against the UPA and LFA without outside interference or protests in spite of the developing Cold War atmosphere. This was largely a result of their own efforts to isolate the movements and keep them "blacked out" in the media. After 1946, when some UPA and LFA bands managed to penetrate other Eastern Bloc countries and even Austria, the Communist press throughout the Bloc condemned the insurgents as bandits and kept their coverage to a minimum. None of this is surprising, however, and the only difference between the post-war campaigns and the anti-Basmachi struggle was that Turkestan in the 1920's was so remote that it took no effort to prevent press coverage. More interesting is the reaction of the West after the liberation movements had achieved contact. One of the most demoralizing events for the LFA was the failure of the Vatican to respond with even moral support to an appeal from Lithuanian Catholics. The LFA's successful exfiltration of insurgents through Poland to the West also met with disappointing results.[107] Surprisingly,

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[106]Marples, "The Kulak in Post-War USSR," 563; and Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 66.

[107]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 89-95.

the insurgents of both regions remained a non-cause in the West, isolated and unaided even though the CIA established contacts with them, flying agents into the Ukraine and occasionally dropping agents in Lithuania by PT boat for intelligence gathering purposes.[108] This degree of isolation meant that even when the UPA established contact with the LFA the insurgents derived little or no benefit from it since neither organization had meaningful contact or outside support. The continued isolation, probably as hoped by the Soviets, had a strong demoralizing effect on the insurgent groups, leaving them even more vulnerable to the impact of the other elements of the Soviet counterinsurgency campaign.[109]

Taken together, the elements of the political campaign against the insurgents contributed to the demise of the Ukrainian and Lithuanian resistance movements. Although the Soviets departed from their earlier practices against

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[108]See William Colby, Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 104; John Ranelagh, The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 137; and Thomas Powers, The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1979), 39. Ranelagh writes that since the operations involved areas acknowledged as Soviet territory they were "tantamount to war. It demonstrated the determination with which the United States entered the Cold War. It also demonstrated a cold ruthlessness: the Ukrainian resistance had no hope of winning unless America was prepared to go to war, America was in effect encouraging Ukrainians to go to their deaths."

[109]Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 22; and Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 89-95.

the Basmachi in a few instances, the methods employed were generally similar. However, the counterinsurgent campaigns against the UPA and the LFA did differ from the earlier campaign in one fundamental way; political measures were secondary in the post-war campaigns and the political concessions aimed at placating the resistance which were so important during the Basmachi campaign were not employed at all. This resulted in a much heavier reliance on military force to crush the insurgent organizations. The immediate commitment of much larger military forces to the campaigns in Lithuania and the Ukraine indicates that this was an intentional policy and not the result of political failure, as in the case of the increased military commitments in the future campaign in Afghanistan.

B. THE MILITARY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UPA AND THE LFA

The separate military campaigns against the Lithuanian and Ukrainian insurgents were as similar as the political methods used. In both cases the Soviets demonstrated their intention to batter the resistance movements into submission with military force. Sufficient resources were committed in each region to accomplish this goal without resorting to softening of the Soviet political goal-the installation of Stalinist party structures. In both cases this simple, direct approach succeeded.

The Lithuanian and Ukrainian resistance movements differed from the Muslim uprisings that preceded and followed them in that they were both organized and well armed from the start of the conflicts. Both were armed with weapons captured from the retreating Germans when the Soviets arrived and both replenished their supplies with captured Soviet weaponry during the course of their conflicts.[110] Unlike the Muslim insurgencies in Turkestan and Afghanistan, the LFA and UPA were not weakened by factional or tribal conflict. Quite the opposite, they were both cohesive organizations without conflicts of interest and both possessed the single goal of national liberation. The main difference between the two was that the Ukrainian resistance movement had organized a military arm to fight the Germans which it turned against the Soviets in 1943 while the Lithuanian Activist Front had concentrated on political resistance against the Germans and only organized its insurgent groups, which began fighting the Soviets in 1944, into the LFA in 1947.

Consequently, the Soviets recognized the Ukrainian threat earlier and directed their partisans operating behind German lines to contain the LFA in the Western Ukraine and to destroy it if possible. In fact, after Soviet partisans entered the Western Ukraine in 1943 the UPA engaged them 54

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[110]Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 25; Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 11.

times and fought the Germans only 43 times by the end of the year.[111] After the Soviets reclaimed the Western Ukraine the NKVD immediately began raids against the UPA.

Although the LAF had not engaged in widespread guerrilla war with the Germans, resistance forces in Lithuania clashed with NKVD troops immediately after the German retreat. Insurgent groups varying in size from dozens to hundreds were formed and established themselves in the Lithuanian forests. The groups eventually evolved into a Northern and Southern district and were finally unified in 1947 under the LFA command headquartered in Vilnius.[112]

Because of their differing backgrounds the LFA and UPA used different methods in their attacks of Soviet forces. The LFA, the smaller and less experienced in guerrilla warfare of the two, tended to operate in smaller units than the UPA and avoided, when possible, clashes with large Soviet forces. The LFA claimed to have 30,000 troops in 1944 and used them in assassinations of party officials and ambushes of the NKVD, avoiding, "attacking sizeable NKVD detachments in larger Lithuanian cities. Instead, groups of two or three freedom fighters would stage surprise raids."[113]

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[111]Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 226, 243-247, 275-277.

[112]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 26-31, 31-34.

[113]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 49.

1. The Counterinsurgent Campaign in the Ukraine

The UPA, which had been battling the Germans for several years already and claimed to have 200,000 troops in 1944, was organized in battalions and companies. They sought out units of Soviet partisans and often defeated them in 1943 and 1944. During the first NKVD-Red Army operations against them the UPA stayed in company and battalion formations and engaged the Soviet forces.[114]

Soviet activity against the insurgents in early 1944 was limited to raids by NKVD "punitive units" against which the UPA was fairly successful. The Soviets greatly increased the pressure on the UPA after the insurgents assassinated Marshal Vatutin in March.[115] The Soviets immediately launched the first major sweep against the UPA, attacking the Northern region with a 30,000 man force with

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[114]Ukrainian sources seem to claim 200,000 most often as UPA troop strength in 1944, see Codo, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Ukraine," 7; and Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 300. One Ukrainian source, Sodol, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 11, claims only 30,000 UPA troops in 1944. Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 12, believes that 100,000, instead of 200,000, is "closer to the truth" but Smith, 17 offers the estimate of 50,000 attributed to General Vlasov during the time that he considered joining forces with the UPA.

[115]Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 297. Vatutin was wounded in a UPA ambush on 26 March and died a few days later. Ukrainian sources point out that the Soviets never admitted that the UPA was responsible for Vatutin's death. However, not all Ukrainian sources mention that the UPA-North commander and his chief of staff both also lost their lives in the Vatutin ambush; Codo, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Ukraine," 13.

aircraft and artillery support and composed of two infantry divisions, two NKVD brigades, an armored brigade, two NKVD frontier police regiments, and militia and partisan units. The operation, called the Cheka-Military operations for the Liquidation of the German-Ukrainian Nationalist Bands was aimed at bagging the approximately 5000 UPA insurgents operating around Volhynia and Polessia. The UPA force managed to extract itself while inflicting 33 percent casualties on the Soviets. However, the UPA units forced to disperse into the southern territories as a result of the Soviet sweep suffered heavy casualties as they crossed the more open countryside. The pressure caused the UPA Supreme Command to order all UPA battalions to breakdown into company size.[116]

In the aftermath of the Vatutin assassination Soviet pressure on the UPA was unrelenting until 1946. Soviet forces established a strong occupation presence countrywide and pauses in counterinsurgency sweeps were only long enough to allow reinforcement and reconstitution. The Soviets launched a second operation in July in which collective responsibility was used to strike at UPA support. Villages were burned, collaborators were summarily executed or deported and, in preparation for future sweeps, the Soviets

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[116]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 17; Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 296-297, 315-316.

began to burn the forest of the West Ukraine. The pressure on the UPA was great enough that it was forced to consider shifting its operations to the East, an option that was abandoned.[117]

Still, the Soviets were frustrated in their efforts to destroy the Ukraine and Stalin appointed Khrushchev as first secretary of the Ukraine in the summer of 1944, charging him with the destruction of the UPA by 15 March 1945 and promising him unlimited men and equipment for the task.[118] In the fall of 1944 Khrushchev initiated the first region-wide offensive against the UPA. Twenty divisions of mostly NKVD troops with heavy weapons and armored support were used to sweep the countryside for insurgents. Although the size and disposition of the UPA forces forced the Soviets to disperse their own troops, the Soviets were still able to achieve local force superiority in all districts. They blockaded the terrain surrounding areas of UPA activity, blockaded villages and established roadblocks. The insurgents were pinned down for weeks unable to escape or conduct reconnaissance, obtain food and supplies, or re-disperse. The UPA nevertheless remained in units and tried to engage the Soviet forces. As a result they suffered heavy losses among their leadership and manpower

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[117]Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 299.

[118]Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 299-300.

that disorganized the field unit organization and disrupted inter-unit liaison. Although the pace of UPA activity would rise and decline several times in the following years, the UPA never completely recovered from the first Khrushchev offensive.[119]

As Khrushchev's operations continued into 1945 the UPA began to give in to the incessant pounding. The units, which had been equipped with heavy machineguns, mortars, and some artillery, began to divest themselves of all but the lightest weapons in order to stay on the move during Soviet sweeps. The Supreme Command ordered the units to begin to avoid pitched battles and only use partisan warfare techniques of hit and run, and only against inferior units. Finally, as the war with Germany began to wind down and the UPA leadership realized that they would soon face even more powerful Soviet forces, the Supreme Command began what Ukrainian sources describe as the UPA's transformation from a military force into an underground organization.[120]

As the UPA devolved to smaller units, the Soviets also shifted their tactics. NKVD troops began to occupy villages permanently while other forces attacked the UPA in raids and ambushes. Mines were laid on approaches to villages and in the forests. The informer network was

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[119]Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 300-304.

[120]Sodol, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 11; Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 304-307.

developed further and UPA supply caches and printing presses were sought out. As 1945 wore on the Soviets used blockades of entire districts to strangle the UPA. Still, the UPA remained active and its propaganda began to affect the Soviet troops. Operations were halted briefly in mid-year in order to replace Red Army units with NKVD troops. Petro Grigorenko, then a Red Army general describes in his memoirs how army friends returning from service in the Ukraine were disgusted with the methods used to suppress the resistance. During this period the UPA able to make a brief show of strength by seizing and holding the town of Stanislaviv for several days.[121]

Finally, after the unreliable troops were replaced, Khrushchev launched the "Great Blockade" of Winter 1945-1946. The blockade was a combined military and ideological thrust against the UPA in retaliation for the Ukrainian boycott of elections to the Supreme Soviet. Employing nearly 600,000 NKVD troops, the Soviets garrisoned every village in the West Ukraine. Once the villages were occupied the Soviets began a sweep that proceeded from house to house. There was sufficient manpower for a close search of the surrounding countryside for bunkers and arms caches. Most of the forests of the West Ukraine were burned during the blockade in order to deny the UPA its natural base of

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[121]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 18.

operations. The blockade was so tight that the UPA found contact with supporters among the population increasingly difficult and were often forced, in their desperation to obtain supplies, to attack village garrisons in order to penetrate the blockade. But the UPA was growing weaker and the Soviets stronger. The NKVD-Red Army forces, which had suffered high casualty rates in their early operations against the UPA, reduced the ratio of UPA to Soviet casualties from 1:10 to 1:3 between January and July 1946. Satisfied with the results of the blockade, Moscow ordered its conclusion and declared the UPA defeated in June 1946.[122]

The UPA would not admit defeat, however, and disbanded its battalions and companies after the conclusion of the Great Blockade to continue as an "underground" organization.[123] Armed resistance at a lower level continued from 1946 to 1950 although the UPA was now limited to the kind of small unit activities and assassinations that the LFA engaged in during the first years of its struggle. The largest UPA operations after 1946 were attacks of state farms and other efforts to disrupt collectivization and some insurgent activity on Polish territory during 1947. A joint Soviet, Czech, and Polish offensive against the UPA on

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[122]Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 10; Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 19; Sodol, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 12; Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 304-310.

[123]Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 11.

Polish territory cost the UPA 7500 casualties. As the strength of the UPA dwindled away, it concentrated on a series of propaganda "raids" into Czechoslovakia, Poland, Eastern Ukraine, and even Austria. Although the raids broke the Soviet news blackout they failed to gain the UPA any outside support.[124]

By the summer of 1949 the UPA was reduced to several cadre-strength units in the Carpathian Mountains. Heavy losses among these forces caused General Shuchewycz, the UPA commander since 1943, to deactivate the remaining units in September. Shuchewycz was killed by NKVD troops in March 1950 and the Supreme Command officially concluded the armed resistance phase in July.[125]

2. The Counterinsurgent Campaign in Lithuania

The Soviets used the same methods against the LFA as they did against the Ukrainian insurgents. The main difference between the two campaigns was that the size and tactics of the LFA kept the level of conflict at a lower level in Lithuania. The NKVD troops maintained a strong presence throughout the country and conducted frequent sweeps against the insurgents but operations in Lithuania

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[124]Martovych, "Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 18-23; Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 19; Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 308, 390-391.

[125]Codo, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Ukraine," 14; Martovych, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 11; Sodol, "The Ukrainian Insurgent Army," 12; Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 310-311, 390.

did not usually attain the size or tempo of those in the Ukraine. Nevertheless, the war was costly for both sides; the Lithuanian Communist Party claims to have lost 20,000 people during the active period of fighting, from 1944 to 1952. The LCP claims that the 20,000 insurgents were also killed during the same period but non-communist sources claim that LFA losses totaled 30,000. NKVD (i.e., Russian losses) have been placed as high as 80,000 men between 1945 and 1949.[126]

The Soviets stationed several NKVD divisions in Lithuania as occupation forces after 1944. The NKVD manpower commitment was sufficient to allow widespread surveillance of the population and frequent "combing through" operations against the insurgents in town and in the countryside.[127] In addition to their routine operations, the NKVD ran three large sweeps during 1946. The operations ranged in size from 7000-15,000 NKVD troops and netted nearly 500 insurgents between June and September although they also cost the lives of about 400 Soviet troops.[128]

As more Soviet troops poured into the country, the Lithuanian insurgent losses climbed, with the LFA estimating

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[126]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 7; Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 50.

[127]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 82.

[128]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 10.

that it lost 5500 troops a year during the peak of the fighting. The LFA simply could not make up for these losses against the Soviets, who could afford to reinforce the 50,000 NKVD troops in Lithuania with 60,000 Red Army soldiers to keep the peace during the 1947 elections.[129] In 1949 the Soviets deployed air force units in support of eight army divisions and 30,000-40,000 NKVD troops in a final drive to clean up the remaining LFA units, which had a total of 5000 active combatants left. The persistent, grinding effect of the Soviet operations reduced the LFA to only 4000 insurgents by 1950. Soviet operations had killed 30,000 insurgents and cost the LFA 90 percent of its cadres. Collectivization had effectively cut off the LFA's food supply and complete isolation from the outside world in spite of efforts to establish contacts and gain outside support completed the demoralization of the remnants of the resistance movement. Finally, the LFA command demobilized its armed resistance effort in 1952.[130]

C. LESSONS OF THE CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE LFA AND THE UPA

The campaigns in Lithuania and the Ukraine present an image of patterns and variations in Soviet methods of

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[129]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 7-9.

[130]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power, 11; Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 78-80, 87, 96.

counterinsurgency. Compared to the earlier struggle with the Basmachi, Lithuania and the Ukraine demonstrate a Soviet tendency to rely on several weapons against insurgencies. Mass terror, deportations, collectivization, massive firepower all reoccur and become familiar as Soviet counterinsurgency devices.

Yet the nature of the wars in Lithuania and the Ukraine overturn the image created in Turkestan of the Soviets as expert and subtle counterinsurgents attuned to the political side of insurgency. In Turkestan the Soviets deftly beat their opponents with a stick while offering them a carrot, in Lithuania and the Ukraine they simply battered their enemy into a stupor. In doing so, the Soviets were willing to pay a much higher price then they had been in Turkestan or would be in Afghanistan. The Ukrainians and Lithuanians generally found the Soviets willing to take very heavy losses.[131] All of this contrasts strangely with the war in Afghanistan, where the Soviets made some use of political concessions but at the same time conducted the bloodiest counterinsurgent war in their history, all the while displaying an extreme reluctance to take casualties of their own. The wars in Lithuania and the Ukraine, so often neglected in examinations of Soviet counterinsurgent

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[131]Smith, "The War in Lithuania and the Ukraine Against Soviet Power," 11; Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 85; Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 221-224.

warfare, offer several interesting insights to the pattern of Soviet behavior in counterinsurgencies.

V. SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN

The Soviet Army was an aggressive and self confident force when it invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. Afghanistan was to be the proving ground for the army's new "external function."[132] The Soviets believed that victory would be swift, a view shared by western observers. Nine hard years later victory was still so distant that the Soviets saw no option but withdrawal. Although the regime they had come to save was tottering on the brink of collapse the final Soviet battles in Afghanistan were fought not in defense of Kabul but to keep the Salang Highway open long enough to get all the troops out and meet the withdrawal deadline. The initial Soviet confidence had proven to be overconfidence and the correlation of forces, once calculated as so favorable, had betrayed the Soviets.

The Soviet Union learned in Afghanistan the same lesson that the United States learned in Vietnam; in counterinsurgency the appropriateness of the force applied is as

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[132]Konstantin A. Vorob'yev, "Development of the External Function of the Army of the Soviet State of the Entire People at the Present Stage," in: The Soviet Art of War, ed. Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 253-256. The Scotts describe this work, which emphasizes the army's role in fighting counterrevolution and was published shortly after the invasion of Afghanistan, as the most candid discussion of the external function of the Soviet Army since the issue was first raised in the early seventies.

important for success as the amount of force. The Soviets were doctrinally unprepared to fight a counterinsurgent war when they invaded Afghanistan and so did not have the appropriate military force to apply to the situation. This chapter examines the Soviet methods of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and the reasons for their failure. However, this is not an argument for how the Soviets could have won in Afghanistan had they been doctrinally prepared for counterinsurgency. For Afghanistan appears in retrospect to have been as much of a quagmire for the Soviets as Vietnam was for the United States. Yet if Afghanistan was winnable, it could not have been won by the methods that the Soviets employed. On the other hand, better preparation for the special demands of counterinsurgent warfare might have brought victory and at the very least would have prevented such an ignominious defeat. More theoretical and doctrinal attention to the problems of counterinsurgency also might have precluded a Soviet invasion.

As it was, the war developed in three phases, each the result of Soviet ineptitude in counterinsurgency. First was the invasion and its immediate aftermath between December 1979 and February 1980. The Soviets found, to their surprise, that the mujahideen resistance did not collapse upon the seizure of Kabul and so made quick adjustments before "mopping up" the rebels. The second phase lasted from February 1980 to 26 September 1986. During this phase

the mujahideen were hard pressed by the Soviet operations and most western observers predicted that they would be ground down and defeated in a long war of attrition. The third and final phase of the war began on 26 September 1986, the day that the mujahideen first used the Stinger surface to air missile, and ended on 15 February 1989 with the final Soviet withdrawal.[133]

Although military operations conveniently define the phases of the war in Afghanistan, it is important also to examine the social-political aspects of the Soviet counterinsurgency effort. All too often the political nature of insurgent or guerrilla war is neglected. This neglect is often the root cause of the failure of counterinsurgency campaigns. The Clausewitzian dictum of war as the continuation of politics by violent means applies in perhaps its purest sense to guerrilla warfare. In guerrilla war many Clausewitzian concepts, such as the offensive and battles of annihilation, are negated or rendered neutral while such factors as the relationship of war to politics, moral factors, and will become all important. Political considerations may be partially and temporarily submerged in favor of military operations during most forms of warfare; in guerrilla war the side that yields

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[133]Robert Pear, "Arming Afghan Guerrillas: A Huge Effort Led by U.S.," New York Times, 18 April 1988, A1 and A11, describes the U.S. supply effort and first use of the Stinger in Afghanistan.

most to this temptation loses. There is some irony and no small lesson on Soviet warfighting style in the fact that the Soviets, who may be the purest Clausewitzians of the great powers, were defeated by their own rigid application of some Clausewitzian principles while ignoring others.

Examination of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan leads to several conclusions. First, the Soviet armed forces were unprepared to fight an insurgency in 1979 when they entered Afghanistan and remain so today, even after nine years of experience in counterinsurgency. This is largely attributable to the lack of theoretical and doctrinal attention paid to counterinsurgent warfare by the Soviets as described in chapter II. Several additional operational weaknesses, to be outlined below, that are not directly attributable to Soviet weakness in counterinsurgency aggravated the effects of this unpreparedness. Finally, while it is important to consider the social-political counterinsurgent programs used by the Soviets in Afghanistan, since the Soviets relied most heavily on military means in the counterinsurgent campaign the effects of the military operations tended to overshadow the social-political aspects of the war and to be counterproductive to the social-political programs of the campaign. Quite simply, military operations defined the nature of the entire counterinsurgent program in Afghanistan when, as described above, social-political considerations

should have. All of these factors contributed to the Soviet defeat.

A. SOCIAL-POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENT CAMPAIGN: SOVIETIZATION

The "massive, well-coordinated program"[134] of Soviet penetration and control of Afghanistan began in 1955 with a $3,000,000 arms sale. From that small beginning the Soviets were able, by 1978, to penetrate and control Afghanistan politically, militarily, and economically. During the intervening 23 years the United States failed to respond to the trend towards Soviet hegemony in Afghanistan and did not react until the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

During that time the Soviet program of penetration and control resulted in Afghan dependence on Soviet weapons supplies, the training of thousands of Afghans in the Soviet Union, and the placement of hundreds of Soviet advisors in Afghanistan. It all culminated in the 1978 coup d'etat which placed a Soviet sponsored communist party in power in Afghanistan. Thousands of Soviet advisors promptly poured into the country and were placed at every level of the government and the military. As many as 20,000 Soviet

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[134]Muhammad R. Azmi, "Soviet Politico-Military Penetration in Afghanistan, 1955 to 1979," Armed Forces and Society 12, no. 3 (Spring 1986), provides thorough coverage of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan before the invasion. Anthony Arnold, Afghanistan, the Soviet Invasion in Perspective (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985) also outlines the pre-invasion Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, including PDPA attitudes towards the Soviets.

troops entered the country to assist in the consolidation of communist power. It was during this period that active resistance to the communist regime's programs and Soviet influence began to take root in the countryside. Eventually, the regime's inability to control the situation led to the Soviet invasion.

After the invasion they continued the three general approaches of military, economic, and political penetration, and added the extra dimension of countrywide sovietization. These programs were carried out behind a shield of military operations against the rebels that included a strategy of migratory genocide, an important element in the Soviet program to penetrate and control Afghanistan. Nine years of scorched-earth warfare created an Afghan refugee population of 6,000,000 people out of a total population of 16,000,000.[135] Nine percent of the Afghan population died as a result of the war.[136] Military operations against the mujahideen therefore had a profound societal impact and obviously affected the social-political counterinsurgent programs. Though the migratory genocide program undoubtedly complicated life for the mujahideen it also had a great negative impact on the government's sovietization programs,

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[135]Louis Dupree, "The Soviet Union and Afghanistan in 1987," Current History, October 1987, 334.

[136]Karp, "Eight Years of Occupation," 19.

highlighting the counterproductive nature of the Soviet's military operations.

The Soviets ensured their control of Afghanistan after the invasion by placing advisers in every ministry and attaching an adviser to every important Afghan official. Soviet approval of every important decision was required from the prime minister's office down to army units in the field. By 1984 Soviet civilian and military advisers in Afghanistan may have numbered as many as 15,000. Soviet military strength was also completely dominant with the number of Soviet troops in Afghanistan being more than twice the number of Afghan soldiers.[137]

With control of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the government firmly in hand after the invasion, the Soviets began their efforts to put the PDPA in firm control of the country. The main instruments of Soviet efforts to control and sovietize Afghanistan were the PDPA, the party's secret police (KHAD), the party organs, and the Afghan and Soviet armies. From the time of their invasion of Afghanistan Soviet intentions were clear. As one writer puts it: "There is no question that the ultimate Soviet goal is to turn Afghanistan into a docile

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[137]Amstutz, Afghanistan, The First Five Years, 884-888.

Marxist-Leninist satellite, and meantime to control all aspects of its administration."[138]

The Soviets have fought Muslim guerrillas several times since the 1917 Revolution in order to subjugate Moslem ethnic groups within the Soviet Union. In 1981 Alexander Bennigsen outlined five historical lessons from those successful struggles and concluded that the Soviets had failed to apply them in Afghanistan. The five lessons were: "(1) divide the adversary; (2) win over crucial native groups; (3) create a strong indigenous Communist Party apparatus; (4) field a Muslim national army; and (5) create an Afghan national Communism."[139]

The five lessons outlined in the Rand report are a concise representation of the essentials for Soviet victory in Afghanistan. However, Bennigsen's thesis that the Soviets were not using those lessons in Afghanistan was incorrect. The Soviet penetration efforts in Afghanistan between 1955 and 1978 already outlined make clear that the Soviet's were pursuing hegemony in Afghanistan through use of principles contained in lessons 3-5 and, after the beginning of Afghan resistance, applied the principles of

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[138]Anthony Arnold, "The Stony Path to Afghan Socialism: Problems of Sovietization in an Alpine Muslim Society," Orbis 29, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 45.

[139]Alexandre Bennigsen, The Soviet Union and Muslim Guerrilla Wars, 1920-1981: Lessons for Afghanistan (Santa Monica: Rand, August 1981: N-1701/1).

lessons 1 and 2. The failure of Soviet efforts to date may be attributed to the simple fact that the Afghan resistance thwarted most Soviet efforts to implement the historical lessons of their previous struggles with Muslim guerrillas.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was the main instrument of sovietization. The PDPA may also have been the weakest link in the chain of oppression that bound Afghanistan. The party was split between the dominant Parchamis and the more radical Khalqis beginning in 1967. In addition to the effects of factionalism, the PDPA was further hobbled by its image among the Afghan population as a completely illegitimate proxy of the Soviets. Party membership after years of intensive recruitment effort remained well under one percent of the population and was mostly confined to the army, the secret police, and government functionaries. So although the Soviets and the PDPA had worked since 1965 to develop a strong party apparatus and create Afghan national communism the goal remained distant.[140]

The National Fatherland Front (NFF), created in 1981, was the party organ that coordinated the overall sovietization effort in Afghanistan. The NFF, included 15 sub-fronts such as: youth organizations, trade unions, religious councils, women's groups, and tribal councils, and

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[140]Arnold, "The Stony Path," 46.

was intended as a bridge between the PDPA and the Afghan people. The perception of party illegitimacy kept membership and participation in the NFF low and unpopular NFF duties such as enforcement of conscription further alienated it from the Afghan people.[141]

The KHAD and the army were also unsuccessful instruments of sovietization. It was nearly impossible for the KHAD to infiltrate the clannish villages of the countryside where the resistance was centered[142] and the army proved to be militarily ineffective and ideologically unsound; rather than contributing towards sovietization, whole army units have been known to defect. Desertions reduced the Afghan Army to half its 1979 strength of 90,000 men.[143] KHAD forces were assigned to army units to forcibly prevent desertion. The KHAD, which had 20,000 members whose loyalty was bought with high wages, attempted to disrupt the opposition through disinformation and assassinations. Its other mission was to suppress dissent within the population still under regime

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[141]Arnold, "The Stony Path," 48-49.

[142]Arnold, "The Stony Path," 49-50.

[143]Milan Hauner, "Seizing the Third Parallel: Geopolitics and the Soviet Advance into Central Asia," Orbis, 29, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 10.

control. Terror and brutality were the KHAD's main weapons.[144]

Sovietization was pursued on three main fronts: social, economic, and religious. The social and economic aspects of Sovietization represented the strongest long-term threat to Afghan independence. The Soviets, perhaps out of recognition of the success achieved by educational exchange prior to 1978, devoted a large part of their attention after the invasion to education and training of Afghans.

The Afghan educational system was dependent on the Soviets and the PDPA claimed that 40 percent of teachers and 30 percent of students were party members or members of a party front. In 1983 the Soviets claimed to be educating over 1,000,000 primary and 200,000 secondary students. At the university level classes in Marxist philosophy were made mandatory. During 1984, 7500 Afghans were studying in the Soviet Union.[145]

In response to some resistance among older Afghans to the education program the Soviets vastly expanded their sovietization efforts among the Afghan youth. An estimated 50,000 teenagers had been sent to the Soviet Union for

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[144]Craig Karp, "Afghanistan: Eight s of Soviet Occupation," Department of State Bulletin o. 2132 (March 1988): 12.

[145]Karp, "Eight Years of Occupation," 53-54.

education and training by 1985.[146] Part of this number participated in summer camp programs and returned to Afghanistan; as many as 10,000 Afghan youths remained in the Soviet Union for long-term civilian and military training.[147] More permanent arrangements have been made for even younger children who have been placed in orphanages. In 1984, the Soviets sent 870 seven to nine-year olds to the Soviet Union for ten years of education in Soviet boarding schools. Unofficial reports claimed that many of the children had living parents.[148]

The Afghan economy, already highly dependent on the Soviet Union by 1978 was further sovietized after the invasion. Afghanistan has observer status in Comecon and a permanent Afghan-Soviet Commission on Economic and Planning Cooperation was established in Kabul. Collectivization of agriculture proceeded with 1000 collective farms, 50 state farms and several machine and tractor stations created by 1983.[149] The sovietization of the Afghan economy was made even more clear by its economic Five-Year Plans that corresponded with the Soviet schedules and the direct negotiation of trade between Afghanistan and Central Asian

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[146]Hauner, "Seizing the Third Parallel," 10.

[147]Karp, "Eight Years of Occupation," 17.

[148]Arnold, "The Stony Path," 55.

[149]Alex R. Alexiev, "Soviet Strategy and the Mujahedin," Orbis 29, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 34.

republics along the same lines as inter-republic trade within the Soviet Union.[150] Even as the military withdrawal got under way the Soviets implemented a new ten-year project to connect the nine provinces of Afghanistan, and eventually the entire country, to the Soviet power grid. Energy dependence of the northern region, which produces half the national income, could cripple Afghan efforts to become independent.[151]

Sovietization was least successful in terms of reconciling atheistic socialism with Islam. The devout Afghan belief in Islam, along with the independent nature of the Afghan people, proved to be the source of the strongest resistance to sovietization. The Afghan regime and the Soviets tried to force the clergy to read Marxist messages in mosques and worked to infiltrate the Ulema, the college of Islamic religious scholars and clergy, in order to promulgate the government message of the compatibility of socialism and Islam. The Soviets tried with the Muslim clergy the exchange program approach that proved so successful with the Afghan military but many who returned

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[150]Arnold, "The Stony Path," 53.

[151]Steven Weisman, "Soviet Strengthens Economic Links to Northern Afghanistan," New York Times, 20 May 1988, 9.

from the Soviet Union admitted that they still believed "that the Soviet government is against Islam."[152]

B. SOVIET MILITARY STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

As outlined above, the war in Afghanistan had three phases. These phases developed out of Soviet escalation of force and adjustments of methods in response to unyielding mujahideen resistance and enduring political stalemate. It is important to recognize this point since otherwise one could get the mistaken impression that the Soviets controlled the course of the war throughout by always retaining the strategic initiative. Soviet adjustments in the face of continued survival by the mujahideen demonstrates instead that while the Soviets often were on the operational offensive the mujahideen had the strategic initiative through most of the war. In each phase of the war the Soviets were forced to respond to the failure of their military operations and continued pressure from the mujahideen.

1. The Invasion and Its Aftermath: Miscalculation and Failure

The first phase of Soviet strategy in Afghanistan was simple and based on expectations of immediate success; a massive invasion of the country with overwhelming force

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[152]Christina Dameyer, "In Afghanistan, Soviets Find Replacing Islam with Communism isn't Easy," Christian Science Monitor, 6 August 1985, 11.

quickly and ruthlessly seizing the capital and all major lines of communication.[153] The Soviets clearly expected the Afghan rebels to collapse just as the Hungarians and the Czechs did in response to similar Soviet invasion strategies in those countries (although the Soviets briefly faced resistance in Hungary). Comparison of those Soviet invasions to Afghanistan makes the similarity quite clear.[154] That the Soviets saw Afghanistan as no different than Czechoslovakia is further demonstrated by Joseph Collins who describes pre-invasion visits to Afghanistan by Generals Yepishev and Pavlovsky. Both had been involved at high levels in the invasion of Czechoslovakia and recommended similar actions in Afghanistan.[155]

The extent of the Soviet miscalculation of the situation in Afghanistan is further emphasized by Adam Ulam's analysis of Soviet considerations before the invasion. According to Ulam, Soviet calculations of the impact of an invasion of Afghanistan concentrated on the possible U.S. response. Any consideration of the response

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[153]Joseph Collins, "Soviet Military Performance in Afghanistan: A Preliminary Assessment," Comparative Strategy 4, no. 2 (1983), 148-154, describes the Soviet invasion strategy.

[154]Alex P. Schmid, Soviet Military Interventions Since 1945 (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1985) demonstrated the Soviet use of a "textbook" strategy in all three invasions in a series of comparative case studies.

[155]Collins, "Soviet Military Performance," 149.

of the Afghan people to an invasion is conspicuous by its absence.[156] The vacillation of the Carter administration and its preoccupation with Iran seemed to preclude an effective U.S. response to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. This calculation of the correlation of forces was typical for the Soviets who tend to be fixated with the highest (nuclear) end of the conflict spectrum. Yet it failed to take into account the moral factors and national will as emphasized by Clausewitz. This turned out to be a costly error, the lesson of which the Soviets have only begun to learn in retrospect. In 1988 Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Shevardnadze said in a speech that:

> The postwar experience is beginning to introduce substantial changes into the possibilities of force. Even if the force is superior, more often than not it does not give the aggressor the planned result, and in instances it becomes a sort of boomerang which strike its own positions.
>
> It is incorrect and even dangerous to appraise the strength or weakness of another state using the traditional indices without taking into account the staunchness of and will of its people for resistance, or to assess them on the basis of superficial data.[157]

The Soviets incorrectly assumed that since the fall of Petrograd, Budapest, and Prague had in the past been the key to power, as had the Bolshevik seizure of Petrograd and

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[156]Adam B. Ulam, Dangerous Relations (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 254-258.

[157]Eduard Shevardnadze, "The 19th All-Union CPSU Conference: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy," International Affairs USSR, October 1988, 17.

Moscow, the fall of Kabul would have the same effect. Failure to consider the kind of intangibles discussed by Shevardnadze meant that the initial Soviet strategy was based on false assumptions that invited disaster. The combination of Islam as a source of resistance and the very nature of Afghan society, both ignored in Soviet pre-invasion calculations, proved to be almost insurmountable obstacles to Soviet control of Afghanistan.[158]

Having miscalculated the chances for resistance, the Soviets blundered further by invading Afghanistan with category II and III mobilization divisions fleshed out with Soviet Central Asians. This illustrates the Soviet expectation that no significant military operations would be required (especially extensive counterinsurgency operations) once the capital had been secured. Their decision to use Central Asian soldiers in the interest of rapid mobilization and surprise and disregarding intangibles such as race and religious affinity illustrates the Soviet perception of the invasion as a standard operation. The Soviet error was quickly evident when the Central Asian soldiers soon proved more likely to collaborate with the rebels than fight

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[158]See Eden Naby, "The Concept of Jihad in Opposition to Communist Rule: Turkestan and Afghanistan," Studies in Comparative Communism 14, no. 3/4 (Autumn/Winter 1986): 287-300; and Anthony Arnold, "The Stony Path to Afghan Socialism: Problems of Sovietization in an Alpine Muslim Society," Orbis 29, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 40-57.

them.[159] The Central Asian soldiers were replaced by February 1980.

This marked the end of the first phase of the war in Afghanistan; a phase marked by miscalculation, shock, and efforts to adjust to unexpected realities. It is impossible to say whether the Soviets would have opted against invasion had they made less ethnocentric, more realistic appraisal. One is inclined to believe that the Soviets, in view of the world correlation of forces, would have proceeded but perhaps with more realistic expectations and, as a result, with a more effective operational approach. As it was, the Soviet invasion only intensified mujahideen resistance by recasting the conflict as a Jihad against foreign infidels. By February 1980, when the redeployment of troops indicated growing Soviet realization of the nature of the conflict, the Soviets were committed to what would be a long and costly war.

2. February 1980 to September 1986: The Period of Soviet Domination

Once the initial invasion strategy failed the Soviets quickly turned to a strategy of all out, countrywide warfare against the resistance. The Soviet troop commitment quickly expanded to about 100,000 troops, organized under the 40th Army. This army comprised six motorized rifle

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[159]Alex Alexiev and S. Enders Wimbush, Soviet Central Asian Soldiers in Afghanistan (Santa Monica: Rand, January 1981): N-1634-NA.

divisions, five air assault brigades, airborne/ranger units, as many as 650 helicopters of all types (including about 240 gunships) and several squadrons of attack aircraft including MiG-21s, MiG-23s, and SU-25s. In addition, as many as 40,000 remaining troops of the Afghan Army (approximately 40,000 deserted after the invasion) were available for counterinsurgency operations and occupation duties.[160]

Employing these forces the Soviets began to follow an offensive strategy against the mujahideen in the countryside. During the first year the Soviets remained tied to roads while using their armored vehicles in conventional attacks against rebel positions. These operations were generally ineffective and although the rebels were under pressure the Soviet position in Afghanistan deteriorated to the point that only about ten percent of the country was under Soviet control. The rest was either under rebel control or changed hands as often as troops of the opposing sides moved across it (a condition favorable to the rebels).[161] As in the campaign against the Basmachi, the Soviet forces performed two functions: occupation and counterinsurgency. According to Alex Alexiev, 75 percent of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan were

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[160]Collins, "Soviet Military Performance," 154; and John Hannon, "Paktia Observations," International Defense Review (November 1985): 1733-1735.

[161]Collins, "Soviet Performance," 154-155.

occupation, the Soviets were apparently returning to the use of larger units (at least battalion size) in attacks on the rebels.[166] Through the rest of the war, Soviet ground operations would be a combination of large unit "hammer and anvil" sweeps against the rebels and smaller more sophisticated operations as described by Alex Alexiev.

It was during this period of mounting frustration, when the existing doctrine, training, and equipment were all proving unsuited to the counterinsurgent environment, that the Soviets increased their troop commitment to between 120,000 and 150,000 and extended the war to the population in general. The Soviets began to try to disrupt the rebel logistical lines into Pakistan and at the same time tried to separate the rebels from a sympathetic and helpful populace. Soviet methods included high altitude carpet bombing of the countryside, large scale use of chemical weapons (concentrated on the rebel supply routes), deliberate destruction of villages suspected of aiding the rebels, extensive mine-laying (including toy mines and mining of agricultural fields-eventually totally up to 30,000,000 mines),[167] and destruction of crops and irrigation systems. The terror tactics developed during this period worked to a

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[166]David C. Isby, "Soviet Tactics in the War in Afghanistan," Jane's Defence Review 4, no. 7 (1983), 689.

[167]Steve Lohr, "Moscow's Millions of Deadly Seeds: Afghan Mines," New York Times, 2 March 1989, A3.

devoted to occupation duties that consisted mostly of security for important installations and transportation arteries.[162] Counterinsurgency missions were performed by airborne, assault, and reconnaissance troops, often lumped together by outside observers as **spetsnaz**. These troops made up 15 to 20 percent of the Soviet troops and bore the brunt of combat.[163] Their missions included operations in the mountains against mujahidin strongholds, securing mountain passes and setting up ambushes.[164] The counterinsurgency forces typically operated in no larger than company formation and during 1985 and 1986 they reached their peak of effectiveness, costing the mujahideen numerous casualties.[165]

It was during the second year of the occupation that the Soviets began to develop these more flexible tactics against the mujahideen, including heavier use of helicopters, air assault forces, and smaller units. Yet the Soviets remained preoccupied with controlling the cities and roadways and essentially yielded the countryside to the rebels. In addition, by 1982, the third year of the

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[162]Alex Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan (Santa Monica: Rand, May 1988, R-3627-A).

[163]Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, 27-28.

[164]Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, 27.

[165]Edward Girardet, "Afghanistan: The Soviets Get Tougher," Christian Science Monitor, 27 December 1985, 1 and 8.

limited degree (in some areas over 80 percent of Soviet inflicted casualties were civilian) and continued to the end of the war.[168] It was during this period that western reporter's assessments of the rebel's chances were the bleakest. The Soviet's all-out warfare against the entire population of Afghanistan was read at that time as a signal of Soviet determination to see the war through to the end; in retrospect it was clearly a policy born of desperation and confusion.

The mujahideen resistance continued but their efforts were weakened by factionalism and their morale eroded by the increasing effects of unrestrained warfare by the Soviets. Yet the new Soviet efforts failed on two counts; in terms of the non-military counterinsurgency program, they tended to negate the social-political programs of the sovietization program and in military terms, they hurt the rebels but failed to extend Soviet control over new territory or consolidate it in areas of Soviet garrisons. In fact, the mujahideen were able to keep large portions of the peasant population on the land by developing an underground government including schools, hospitals, and postage stamps.[169] In addition, as Alex Alexiev pointed out,

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[168]Alex Alexiev, "Soviet Strategy and the Mujahideen," Orbis 29, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 33.

[169]Mary Ann Weaver, "Young Afghan Represents New Breed of Guerrilla Leader," Christian Science Monitor, 21 March 1986, 1 and 10.

the improvement in Soviet military performance against the rebels was due largely to the Soviet's complete domination of the air. The tenuous nature of the Soviet's improved condition was proven by the rapid decline of Soviet fortunes after the introduction of the Stinger SAM.

3. September 1986 to February 1989: The Mujahideen Resurgence

September 1986 was the turning point of the war. On the 26th of that month the mujahideen used the U.S. supplied Stinger missile for the first time.[170] Alex Alexiev cites one source that attributes 270 downed aircraft to the Stinger between October 1986 and September 1987.[171] The Stinger placed severe constraints on Soviet ground support air operations and provided new operational freedom of movement to the mujahideen. The erosion of mujahideen morale and effectiveness was reversed and by late 1987 a military stalemate was evident as were political gains by the rebels. The new air defense capabilities allowed the mujahideen to develop further the governmental infrastructure that had taken root in 1983-84. The rebels established

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[170]Pear, "Arming Afghan Guerrillas," A11.

[171]Alexiev, "Inside the Soviet Army," 33.

hundreds more health centers, schools, and agricultural projects.[172]

The Soviets seemed incapable of making operational and tactical adjustments beyond those that had been made in the early stages of the war (about 1980 to 1982). The difficulties and divisions of the occupying army described by Alexiev must have been exacerbated by the aura of declining Soviet fortunes that existed after late 1986. On the other hand, the increased morale that the success of the Stinger brought to the rebels inspired greater cooperation among the various mujahideen factions.[173]

By late 1987 the Soviets were sending signals that they would seek a way to withdraw. Both the political leadership and the military had had enough and were unwilling to make greater sacrifices for unlikely returns. The Soviet military estimated that victory was still "theoretically possible" but only if the troop commitment was tripled.[174] This was apparently a much higher cost than the Soviet leadership was willing to pay. In February 1988 Gorbachev announced a plan for withdrawal and Soviet troops

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[172]Edward Girardet, "Afghanistan War Defies Political Solution," Christian Science Monitor, 21 December 1987.

[173]Edward Girardet, "Afghan Fighters Slowly Erode Soviet Control," Christian Science Monitor, 23 December 1987, 7 and 8.

[174]Paul Quinn-Judge, "Soviet Military in Afghanistan Said to Strongly Favor Withdrawal," Christian Science Monitor, 10 February 1988, 1.

began leaving Afghanistan on 15 March. The withdrawal was completed on 15 February 1989.

C. IMPLICATIONS

Several ironies stand out in the Soviet defeat. The first is that national will, ignored by the Soviets at the outset of the war, was ultimately the cause of their defeat; both the abundance of the Afghan will to resist and the relative lack of Soviet will to win. The Soviets apparently eschewed a strategy of escalation and went almost immediately to the maximum troop level that they were willing to commit (between 120,000 and 150,000 or about 2 percent of the total Soviet ground force). The Soviets did not have the will to triple their troop commitment in pursuit of victory. One clue to this lack of Soviet will is their efforts, identified by Alexiev, to keep casualties to a minimum and to disperse them as much as possible among the Soviet population.[175] The political motivations for this policy (in light of the unpopularity of the war among civilians and the military) are clear and were probably reinforced by the operationalization of the Marxist theory of just and unjust wars that was demonstrated by the war in Afghanistan.[176]

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[175]Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, 24.

[176]As described by Christopher Jones, "Just Wars and Limited Wars: Restraints on the Use of the Soviet Armed Forces," World Politics 28, no. 1 (October 1975): 44-68. Nicholas Daniloff, "Afghan War Finally Hits Soviets' Home

A second irony is the failure of the Soviet use of technology (the Mi-24 and the Su-25, for example) to bring victory but the crucial contribution of technology (the Stinger) to Soviet defeat. The lesson seems to be that technology alone will not bring victory to counterinsurgent forces that lack effective counterinsurgent doctrine and training. On the other hand, technology can apparently give an all important edge to committed, effective insurgent forces.

The final irony is the price that the Soviets, as Clausewitzian as they are in their approach to war, paid for ignoring important Clausewitzian principles. The Soviet failure to subordinate war to politics is described above. An additional oversight on their part was their failure, while calculating the correlation of forces, to consider the conditions existing in Afghanistan that favored a guerrilla resistance. Clausewitz described five general conditions under which a general uprising could be effective:

- The war must be fought in the interior of the country.
- It must not be decided in a single stroke.
- The theatre of operations must be fairly large.

Front," U.S. News and World Report, 16 December 1985, 41-42 describes the Soviet population's negative response to the war.

- The national character must be suited to that type of war.
- The country must be rough and inaccessible.[177]

Had the Soviets been less disdainful of insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare, they might have considered these conditions more closely, and, seeing their near perfect applicability to Afghanistan, been less willing to rush to the aid of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

The Soviet army faced an additional obstacle to victory; its own character and the character of its military and political leadership. One analyst of guerrilla warfare has noted that: "Regular troops...even when employing irregular tactics, operate from a governmental, legal base, and appear to suffer from attitudinal and structural inhibitions that must first be recognized if they are to be overcome.[178]

The centralized, group-oriented nature of Soviet society would certainly magnify the inhibition that one would normally expect in regular troops, further decreasing the effectiveness of troops already operating outside the limits of their doctrinal training.

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[177]Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 480.

[178]Peter Paret and John W. Shy, Guerrilla's in the 1960's (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962): 43-44.

VI. SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY: PATTERNS AND VARIATIONS

The Soviets fought successfully three of the four major anti-Soviet insurgencies described in this paper. However, their defeat in the latest conflict, Afghanistan, has overshadowed their earlier victories and created the perception of Soviet inability to win in counterinsurgency warfare. The magnitude of the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan appears to validate this perception; one of the two greatest military powers in the world, operating almost without restraint, was unable to defeat the small irregular forces of one of the least developed countries on earth. Certainly, as described above, the Soviets displayed in Afghanistan several shortcomings of political perception and military doctrine and structure which, if uncorrected, could lead to defeat in future counterinsurgent campaigns.

However, it is also important to realize that the international context of the war in Afghanistan was vastly different from that of the earlier counterinsurgent campaigns. As noted in Chapter V, the Soviets had calculated that the United States and other western nations would stay out of the conflict. Based on the United States' historic disinterest in Afghanistan, this was a reasonable conclusion. When the U.S. and several other nations responded to the invasion with support for the rebels and

pressure on the Soviets the war took a turn that the Soviets had not expected and which put many factors of the war beyond their control. The fact that the mujahideen were never isolated from aid, refuge, or political support was an important break from the past pattern of Soviet counterinsurgencies and proved crucial to the rebel's victory.[179]

Examination of the campaigns in Turkestan, Lithuania, and the Ukraine nullifies the generalization that the Soviets are incapable of winning a counterinsurgent war. It is clear that, quite to the contrary, the Soviets are entirely capable of defeating an insurgency. In three cases they applied sufficient will and force to defeat major insurgencies. Although not codified in the scientific, comprehensive framework of Soviet military thought, which includes theory, doctrine, and strategy, similar methods of applying political will and military force were used in all four cases. In effect, a de facto doctrine of counterinsurgency emerged during the struggle in Turkestan and, with

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[179]Olivier Roy, Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 207-218, describes mujahideen contact with the West. See Robert Pear, "Arming Afghan Guerrillas: A Huge Effort Led by U.S.," New York Times, 18 April 1988, A1 and A11 for a description of the international support network of the rebels and the amount of aid provided. Edward Girardet, "Reporting Afghanistan's Brutal War," Christian Science Monitor, 24 December 1987, 10, describes Soviet efforts to block media reports of the Afghan war.

modifications and variations, was employed in each succeeding counterinsurgency campaign.[180]

A. THE DE FACTO SOVIET COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE

The de facto doctrine employed by the Soviets against four insurgencies corresponds to what Thomas Hammond calls the anatomy of communist takeovers. In essence the doctrine has as its prototype the Bolshevik seizure of power and the subsequent power consolidation methods used by Lenin and Stalin. This use of the methods of revolution is not surprising in light of the Soviet definition of insurgency against communist regimes as counterrevolution (I.B).

Hammond describes six elements of the Bolshevik takeover: the use of armed force, the use of propaganda, ruthlessness, the party (as the "organizational weapon"), planning (and control by the party), use of camouflage (of the actual intentions of the party).[181] Each of these appeared in varying degrees in the Soviet counterinsurgency campaigns between 1918 and 1988.

1. The Use of Force

Force has been the dominant factor in the cases examined here. Even in Turkestan, where the Soviets were most successful in weakening the resistance through

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[180]Some patterns of Soviet counterinsurgency were identified in Paschall, "Marxist Counterinsurgencies," 5-6.

[181]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 248.

political measures, military force, "the sheer weight of Russian arms," was still the deciding factor.[182] In Lithuania and the Ukraine the Soviets relied much less on political compromise than they had in Turkestan and military force played an even greater role in the defeat of the resistance. In Afghanistan, military force was again dominant even as the Kabul regime sought to pacify the resistance through programs of "national conciliation." There, however, the all out military efforts of the Soviets seemed only to inspire stronger resistance yet force remained the backbone of the Soviet effort even after the accession to power of the seemingly progressive Gorbachev.[183]

2. Party Control and the Urban Bias

Although force has played the major role in defeating anti-Soviet insurgencies, the party has remained in control of the planning and execution of counterinsurgent strategies. The turnaround of the campaign against the Basmachi by Turkkomissia is the most striking example of party control but party dominance in the Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Afghan campaigns is also clear.

Perhaps the obvious Soviet preoccupation with securing urban areas and lines of communication in an

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[182]"The Basmachi," Central Asian Review, 248.

[183]In fact, the tempo of Soviet military operations increased. See Edward Girardet, "The Soviets Get Tougher," Christian Science Monitor, 27 December 1983, 1.

insurgency is a result of the close control that the party exercises over counterinsurgent strategies.[184] The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has an historic sense of ambivalence and even disdain for the peasants and the countryside they occupy that dates from Lenin's time. The Bolsheviks were urbanites and made their revolution in the cities. Although they needed the support of the peasants to seize power and then to survive, they retained their urban bias and this seems to show through in the Soviet approach to counterinsurgency; just as revolution must be made first in the cities, counterrevolution must first be defeated in the cities. In Turkestan, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, where the Soviets had sufficient forces to secure the cities, occupy the countryside, and still pursue the insurgents, this approach worked. In Afghanistan the Soviets were forced by insufficient manpower to choose between counterinsurgency operations, securing the roads and cities, and occupying the countryside. Not surprisingly, the Soviets decided to secure the cities at the expense of occupying the countryside or devoting more troops to counterinsurgency. This helped to create the stalemate which eventually wore down Soviet resolve in Afghanistan.

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[184]Paschall, "Marxist Counterinsurgencies," 5-6, notes the urban emphasis of Soviet counterinsurgency.

3. What Constitutes Ruthlessness in Soviet Counter-insurgency

Since Hammond points out ruthlessness as another hallmark of communist takeovers, it should be no surprise that the party which displayed unlimited ruthlessness in its acquisition and consolidation of power should be equally ruthless in its defense of that power.[185] The four case studies provide ample evidence of Soviet "ruthlessness" in counterinsurgency. In each case a military campaign intended to intimidate the populace as well as destroy the insurgents was combined with political programs intended to purge the population of elements of resistance. Taken together, the various methods that the Soviets employ place the costs of the insurgent struggle on the entire population creating, in effect, a universal program of collective responsibility designed to erode resistance support.

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[185]Heller and Nekrich, Utopia in Power, 50-200, provides a good general description of the early development of the "Red Terror" and all its components: collective responsibility, informant networks, mass arrests, summary executions and deportations--all of which reappear as Soviet counterinsurgency methods. They also note, on page 64, the Bolsheviks methods of dividing their opposition through the "atomization" of society. This also appears in each counterinsurgency case as propaganda efforts to factionalize the resistance, efforts through collectivization and de-kulakization to create class tensions and the use of ethnic militias. Paschall, "Marxist Counterinsurgencies," 5-6, notes both Soviet use of deportations and ethnic militias but gives too much credit to the militias for enabling the Soviets to "divide and conquer." As noted above, militias taken from the local population generally proved unreliable and this was especially the case in Afghanistan.

4. Propaganda and Deception

Propaganda and deception, or "camouflage" as Hammond calls it, of the party's true intentions, established by Lenin, Trotsky, and the other founding fathers, also found their way into the Soviet's counterinsurgency toolbox. In Turkestan they made a significant contribution to Soviet victory but in Lithuania and the Ukraine, where the Soviets relied on a more direct military approach, they played a more minor role. The Soviets made heavy use of propaganda and camouflage in Afghanistan but could not counteract the impact of their equally heavy reliance on armed violence on Muslim perceptions.

B. VARIATIONS IN THE SOVIET APPROACH TO COUNTERINSURGENCY

Comparison of the four major Soviet counterinsurgency campaigns makes clear that a pattern or "de facto doctrine" has developed. Yet it is equally clear that Soviet methods have varied in significant ways from case to case. There are three striking variations: dominance of the army in two of the cases and NKVD operational control in the other two, much less inclination to achieve the goals of the campaign through compromise and camouflage in Lithuania and the Ukraine than in the two Muslim insurgencies, and less willingness to take casualties in the two Muslim insurgencies.

1. The Predominance of the NKVD or the Army

The wartime origins of the insurgencies in Lithuania and the Ukraine and their proximity to the Soviet heartland may explain some of the differences. Unlike the two Muslim insurgencies, which were conflicts in their own right, the Ukrainian and Lithuanian uprisings began as rear area security problems for the Soviets in the wake of the German retreat. As a result, NKVD security forces took the lead in counterinsurgent operations and continued in that role after the war even though the proportion of army troops involved increased after war's end.

2. Political Compromise versus Military Force

The blunt approach of the Soviets in the post-war insurgencies, heavily reliant on force and nearly devoid of conciliatory political moves, contrast sharply with the "camouflaged" methods used against the Muslim insurgents. Here again, the occurrence of the insurgencies during a war (threatening rear area security) and near the strategic heartland of Russia must have inspired the more forceful response. Additionally, the greater strength of the two Muslim insurgencies probably forced Soviet use of alternative methods.

3. Tolerance of Casualties

The obvious Soviet efforts in Afghanistan to avoid casualties, even at the expense of operational effectiveness, is the most intriguing variation. Combined

with the problems of just wars and limited wars outlined by Chris Jones and noted in the preceding chapter, this has done much to raise doubts about Soviet counterinsurgent capabilities. But, as noted in Chapter III, this sensitivity to casualties was evident to some degree during the anti-Basmachi campaign. On the other hand, LFA and UPA forces found the Soviets willing to take heavy casualties, sending "wave after wave" of troops against defensive positions.[186] Again it is likely that the Soviets perceived the Ukrainian and Lithuanian uprisings as more direct threats to Soviet power, especially before the end of World War II. Afghanistan was more likely to be seen as peripheral to Soviet security and interests while excessive casualties might prove to be more destabilizing than the conflict itself. The perception of Turkestan as peripheral may also have been true to a lesser extent and the relative volatility of the Russian populace, as evidenced by the Kronstadt Revolt, may also have increased the Bolshevik desire to minimize casualties.

The implication is that any assessment of Soviet counterinsurgency capabilities based on Afghanistan must take into account Soviet perceptions of the relative threat to Soviet power or interests that any particular conflict may represent. This idea should cast the numerous

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[186]Tys-Krokhmaliuk, UPA Warfare in Ukraine, 221-224; and Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 85.

generalizations about Soviet counterinsurgent capabilities inspired by Afghanistan into a new light. Although the Soviet military and its political masters had not developed a doctrine of counterinsurgency, in three instances the Soviets were sufficiently motivated to defeat insurgencies, even at the higher cost that their doctrinal unpreparedness imposed.

C. CONDITIONS FOR DEFEAT IN AFGHANISTAN

Why, then, did the Soviets succeed against three insurgencies in spite of their lack of doctrine or training geared to the special demands of counterinsurgency but fail against a fourth? The answer lies in several factors that the Soviets had no control over. This raises again the point discussed in Chapter V that Afghanistan may have been unwinnable (all we know is that it was not winnable by the methods the Soviets used) but that the Soviets could have achieved a marginal increase in effectiveness had they developed an actual, instead of de facto, doctrine. This may have been the margin for victory or limited gains instead of the apparent total defeat that Afghanistan became. Instead, it is clear that the conditions of the three earlier campaigns heavily favored the Soviets but that under more challenging conditions, the Soviet shortcomings came into play. Finally, it is important to realize that a truly effective doctrine of counterinsurgency should offer

an analytical framework for deciding whether or not to commit resources to a particular conflict in the first place. This may be the most important lesson of Afghanistan for the Soviets.

1. Geography and Population

Afghanistan was the largest and most difficult counterinsurgency campaign that the Soviets ever faced in terms of both geography and population. The country covers 647,000 square kilometers of territory and had a population of 14,183,671.[187] By comparison, Lithuania has a total area of only 42,000 square kilometers and, in 1939, had a population of 3,000,000.[188] The Western Ukraine encompassed 88,000 square kilometers and had a population during the insurgency of 4,400,000 to 5,600,000.[189] The uprising in Turkestan was nearly as large as the Afghan resistance, the combined areas of the separate movements that made up the Basmachi encompassing nearly 500,000 square kilometers. It is impossible to say how much of Turkestan's population of 12,000,000 lived within the contested areas.[190] The Soviets,

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[187]Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987): 1-2.

[188]Tauras, Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast, 6.

[189]Marples, "The Kulak in Post-War USSR: The West Ukrainian Example," 560.

[190]Paul E. Lydolph, Geography of the USSR (Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin: Misty Valley Publishing, 1979), 20-21; and Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution, 330.

however, enjoyed the advantage of having 500,000 Russian settlers in Turkestan. This offered a militia manpower pool as well as a source of intelligence on enemy movements, essential to successful counterinsurgency and rarely enjoyed by counterinsurgent forces and obviously absent in Afghanistan.

The topography of Lithuania offered little refuge for the LFA, the country is generally level grasslands and plains with 17 percent of the land forested.[191] In the Ukraine the UPA was able to use the Carpathians for refuge but this limited their area of operations to the westernmost Ukraine and the range of 500 to 1500 meters in elevation did not significantly hinder the Soviet forces.[192] Turkestan was a much more challenging area of operations because of its rugged terrain with mountains ranging between 2000 and 6000 meters.[193] However, much of the contested areas of Turkestan were lowlands, such as the Fergana Valley, where the Basmachi gained no advantage over the Red Army forces. The Soviets were forced to fight in rugged terrain in Afghanistan, which is almost entirely mountainous, with

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[191]Jean Gottmann, A Geography of Europe (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 753.

[192]Lydolph, Geography of the USSR, 42.

[193]Lydolph, Geography of the USSR, 101.

elevations ranging up to 5000 meters.[194] As noted in chapters two and five, in Afghanistan the Soviets felt immediately their lack of training in counterinsurgency and mountain warfare.

2. Isolation and External Support

Several other factors that favored the Soviets in the three earlier campaigns but hindered their efforts in Afghanistan are rooted in the Soviet ability to isolate the Basmachi, the LFA, and the UPA and their inability to isolate the Mujahidin. The Soviets were able to close the Afghan border to the Basmachi and to force Afghanistan to suspend the limited assistance it had provided to the rebels. The Basmachi therefore had no source of outside support and no refuge. The UPA and LFA were even more isolated since they were surrounded by communist territory. They, like the Basmachi, carried on their struggle with no outside support or access to a place of refuge. The Afghans, on the other hand, carried on their struggle in the age of superpower competition. As a consequence, they had a source of outside support and, in Pakistan, a refuge. In addition, the Soviets found it impossible to keep the conflict out of the news and so paid a high price in terms of prestige and image. Afghanistan also created internal pressures both on the homefront and in the Soviet Army that

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[194]Louis Dupree, Afghanistan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 5-8.

the Soviets had never encountered during a counterinsurgency campaign before. Simply put, the Soviets found that they could no longer fight whatever kind of war they desired against rebels. They found that they now faced potential consequences for their actions including worsened relations with the United States, the Muslim World, and China.

As a result, the de facto doctrine, which had been sufficient under less challenging circumstances, proved ineffective against the Mujahidin and costly to the achievement of other Soviet goals. Relying too heavily on force and having too few doctrinal constraints, the Soviets finally paid for their long neglect of the problems of counterinsurgency, identified in the West as early as 1968. The Leninist-Stalinist methods of counterinsurgency, just like so much else from that era, seem to have outlived their usefulness in the age of Soviet reform.

D. SOVIET MILITARY DOCTRINE AFTER AFGHANISTAN

There is evidence, described in Chapter V, that the experience in Afghanistan has stimulated greater Soviet attention to counterinsurgency. There is little evidence, however, that this renewed interest has had any permanent effect above the operational and tactical level. Soviet military journals have begun to examine the problems of "local wars" and mountain warfare but have mostly confined themselves to the tactical problems encountered in those

situations. The only change at the doctrinal level that is evident is the counterinsurgency and mountain warfare training that troops going to Afghanistan began to receive.[195] Whether this sort of training will be continued now that the Soviets have withdrawn from Afghanistan remains to be seen. It is also uncertain at this stage whether Afghanistan will inspire development of a Soviet theory, doctrine, and strategy of counterinsurgency. The military was obviously unresponsive to previous experiences against insurgents but, as difficult as those previous campaigns were, they were not defeats. The institutional trauma of defeat by poorly armed, untrained Central Asians may break the previous pattern. The costs of not answering beforehand the questions posed by Marshal Grechko must now be obvious to the Soviets so it seems reasonable to expect significant change in Soviet military doctrine in the coming years.

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[195]Alexiev, Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, 14-15.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Soviets were essentially blind to the difficulties of counterinsurgent warfare before 1979. Their prior experience had been with internal uprisings against which they had vast advantages and in advising allies engaged in lower intensity civil wars. Afghanistan was, no doubt, an eye opening experience that will force the Soviets to reconsider the "external function" of their armed forces which they so confidently described during the seventies. The lesson of Afghanistan will likely restrain the Soviet use of armed force in the foreseeable future. One must anticipate, however, that the shock of losing the longest war in their history (and losing a war for the first time since the Russo-Polish war of 1921) will motivate the development of a Soviet theory and doctrine of counterinsurgency. There is evidence that the Soviet military is already reexamining its experience and the experience of western counterinsurgent forces. So far, this reexamination has been confined to questions at the operational and tactical level.[196] Afghanistan may provide

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[196]See Mark N. Katz, "Anti-Soviet Insurgencies: Growing Trend or Passing Phase?" Orbis 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 361-391; and Valerii Konovalov, "Afghanistan and Mountain Warfare Training," Radio Libery Researsh Bulletin 32, no. 12 (23 March 1988): RL 118/88.

the experiential feedback necessary to develop a military theory of counterinsurgency and, in turn, a counterinsurgency doctrine.

Soviet theory, doctrine, and strategy have as their goal the anticipation of and preparation for future forms of warfare. Clearly, the Soviets failed to do this in the case of Afghanistan. They entered into a war that appears in retrospect to have been nearly unwinnable with no appropriate doctrine or training. Before they realized their blunder they were committed to the war and could not avoid its costly outcome. The impact of the war on the Soviet armed forces and Soviet society will not be fully known for years. The West must, however, anticipate some degree of change in Soviet doctrine, probably significant change, as the result of the war.

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